

Social

Christianity

Hugh Price Hughes, M.A.

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Social Christianity



SOCIAL CHRISTIANITY.

"The blood of Christ is love."

Ignatius of Antioch.

"Ne'er forget how easier far
Devout enthusiasm is, than good deeds.
How soon our indolence contents itself
With pious raptures, ignorant, perhaps,
Of their ulterior end, that we may be
Exempted from the toil of doing good."

Lessing.

SOCIAL CHRISTIANITY:


SERMONS

DELIVERED IN ST. JAMES'S HALL, LONDON.

BY
HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A.

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IF THERE IS
ANYTHING TIMELY OR HELPFUL
IN MY PREACHING,
IT IS, UNDER GOD,
DUE TO
MY WIFE,
TO WHOM,
WITH GRATEFUL AFFECTION,
I DEDICATE
THESE SERMONS.

INTRODUCTION.

FOR many years I have obstinately resisted the importunity of valued friends who have urged me to publish a volume of sermons. I have not deemed any utterance of mine worthy of permanent record. My too busy life affords no time for theological or literary elaboration. But of late the pressure to publish has greatly increased. Above all, it has come to my knowledge that several young Agnostics have been brought to Christ by reading some of the following sermons, which appeared in *The Methodist Times*. If the Divine Father is pleased to use me thus to bring back to Himself any of my wandering brothers, I dare not consult my own taste or preference any longer.

And now that the Rubicon is crossed, I am comforted by the fact that, although the literary form of this volume must bear all the marks of haste inseparable from a very active and varied ministry, the exposition of Christianity which it contains is the slow fruit of a lifetime of observation, reflection, and experience. I am thankful to

have this special opportunity of once more expressing an intense conviction that the manhood of Europe has been to a fearful extent alienated from Christianity because our Christianity has been too speculative, too sentimental, too individualistic.

In our reaction from mediæval ecclesiasticism we have gone too far. We have practically neglected the fact that Christ came to save the Nation as well as the Individual, and that it is an essential feature of His mission to reconstruct human society on a basis of Justice and Love. It has been well said that "the power of love as the basis of a State has not yet been tried." But Christ rose from the dead to try it, and to do it.

Mr. Frederic Harrison's recent New Year's Address to the Positivist Society was full of profound and melancholy truth. His picture of the existing social condition of Europe was exact and vivid. Rightly did he declare that

The vast empires resting upon bayonets and a semi-bureaucracy were an anachronism and an incubus upon the true development of national life. All the great Powers were monstrous outgrowths of warlike ambition and imperial pride in different degrees and under different conditions. All the huge military systems were abnormal—the morbid results of the spirit of war and domination, of national selfishness and revolutionary violence.

The English apostle of Positivism proceeded to

denounce and deplore the social failure of modern Christianity in the following passage :—

In a healthy state of things, and if Christianity were equal to its proud pretensions, it would be the business of the great white races of Europe gradually to raise the standard of civilization through Asia and ultimately through Africa. But what was seen at the present day in Africa was the mere lust of conquest, of trade gains, of lands to be won by fighting, and profits to be snatched by fraud, strength, wealth, and chicanery. The European nations who were racing against each other for the most tempting slice of the spoils of Africa were acting as mere buccaneers. Soldiers, pioneers, discoverers, geographers, travellers, missionaries, and philanthropists, however noble might be the character and purpose of some few among them, were all really engaged, along with the journalist and the pseudo-scientist and the merchant who hounded them on, in plundering and enslaving Africa, in crushing, demoralizing, and degrading the African races. For a remedy against such widespread evils as Imperialism and social unrest, to what could men look? What power alone could control forces so tremendous and passions so wild? What could it be but religion? The world was practically without religion, and nothing but religion could save the world. Christianity, as the morality of nations, had visibly failed. Socially regarded, it did almost nothing to control the state of expectant war and the jealousies of nations. The dignitaries of the national Christian Church were to be seen everywhere blessing the armies of emperors and kings, and offering up prayers and thanksgivings for victories and conquests. Did the representatives of Jesus of Nazareth do anything to reduce the number of men in arms, or to adjourn the day in which they would be engaged in the most tremendous and bloody war known in history? Did they mitigate the social warfare of

classes, and the selfishness of wealth, or check the spoliation and enslavement of Africa? It was very much the fashion at present to trust to the spirit of the age to remedy all evils and to bring about ultimate happiness. It was trusting to a broken reed. There was as much and more need of religion than ever. Morality by itself was not wide, potent, or systematic enough to stand the strain. It did not supply a complete philosophy of life. It did not fire the imagination, standing between man and the world, and explaining the world. It was now a hundred years since the new system had been visibly inaugurated, and during that hundred years what failures, wars, and revolutions, what endless unrest and what noble strivings, were recorded! And without some new element why should not another hundred or a thousand years pass in the same cross purposes and failures and blind useless strivings? The 18th and 19th centuries were marked as the only epochs in the history of mankind in which the most persistent strivings towards social and moral improvement in a systematic way had been manifested. Genius, devotion, and loftiness of aim had not been wanting. Yet how wasted the effort and how increasing the discord! In France noble efforts had been made to close the work of the Revolution; but why was France this day in terror, anger, and unrest, torn by faction, without statesmen or a stable system, ringing with recrimination, and the seat of a peculiarly foul form of moral corruption? Why was this the result of one hundred years of revolution, of the heroic hopes and undying aspirations of a most generous people? France had undertaken the most arduous of all tasks without religion, a task which was impossible without religion—the task of recasting society and refounding the nation. With genius, energy, and a desire for good things, there was an absence of moral force. No one was content, no one was hopeful. There was neither confidence nor happiness.

It is impossible to answer Mr. Frederic Harri-

son's impeachment of ecclesiastical Christianity, although some of his detailed statements are questionable. His energetic address strikingly resembles the sermons and pamphlets with which John Wesley startled England a century ago. It is characterized by the same plain and trenchant English, the same hatred of sham and humbug, the same fearless denunciation of ecclesiastical neglect and callousness, the same passionate love of the masses of the people. Would to God that Mr. Frederick Harrison had that personal knowledge of the living Christ which enabled John Wesley to discriminate between ecclesiastical, conventional, perfunctory Christianity, and the Christianity of Christ! But Mr. Harrison is not far from the Kingdom of God. He realizes that what Europe needs above everything else is social religion. What could be more significant or more hopeful than the frank and noble sentiments of the closing section of the address?

Europe was craving for religion to knit up its efforts and renew its hopes, for now there was no consensus and no sign of it. Theology and science stood apparently in a hopeless deadlock, where neither could crush the other or free itself from the other's grasp; and capital and labour, inseparably bound together as they were, were yet striking terrible blows at each other. If the old theology could really cure all these evils at last, or only begin to deal with them, in heaven's name let it do so quickly, and all would welcome the triumph. The power of Christianity for the moral life of the individual was one which Positivism had always recog-

nised ; but the power of Christianity for the intellectual, scientific, or political life of nations in a revolutionary age, or for the industrial life of the present generation, was the problem of the day. It was there that Christianity not only failed, but was criminally complacent to the evils.

The following sermons are a brief and fragmentary attempt to show that the social failure of Christianity is not the fault of Christianity or of Christ, but of us Christians who have been selfishly individualistic. Bushnell's felicitous epigram is indeed true : "The soul of all improvement is the improvement of the soul." But that is the beginning, not the end of our work. We must not be "so busy saving souls that we have no time to save men and women." We must not forget that "all authority" is given to our Lord Jesus Christ "on earth" as well as "in heaven" ; and that our work will never be completed until the prayer which He Himself taught us is fulfilled, and the will of God is done *on earth* as angels do it in heaven.

Already there are many hopeful signs. Canon Westcott is not alone in realizing that "we are suffering on all sides from a tyrannical individualism." Many have already come round to Charles Kingsley's "belief that not self-interest but self-sacrifice is the only law upon which human society can be grounded with any hope of prosperity and

permanence." One of the best and most useful events of this new year is the proposal just made by Lord Nelson, first in *Church Bells* and then in the *Contemporary Review*, that all Christians, however widely they may differ on theological and ecclesiastical topics, should co-operate in the promotion of Social Christianity. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance and blessedness of this proposal. We Christians, when we unite our forces, are simply irresistible. Let us, then, in the name of God and humanity, combine heartily to abolish Slavery, Drunkenness, Lust, Gambling, Ignorance, Pauperism, Mammonism, and War. After that is done, we shall not have much difficulty in settling all our theological and ecclesiastical differences; and the glory of God, which is the happiness of men, will fill the whole earth.

HUGH PRICE HUGHES.

8, TAVITON STREET,
GORDON SQUARE, W.C.

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1.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE MASSES.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday afternoon,
Oct. 30th, 1887.*

I.

JESUS CHRIST AND THE MASSES.

“When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them.”—ST. MATT. ix. 36.

OUR subject this afternoon is “Jesus Christ and the Masses: what He thought of the Masses of the People.” Jesus Christ was essentially a man of the People—a working man. He spent all His days among the poor; and after His public life had begun He almost lived in the crowd. He was constantly surrounded by the crowd. Nothing is more characteristic of Jesus Christ than the familiar saying that “The common people heard Him gladly.” Therefore when we come across anybody whom the common people do not hear gladly, he may be a very estimable man, but we know that he is not like Jesus Christ. I was very much struck by a remark I heard in Scotland about an undoubted Christian. Some one said of him: “He is a very good man, but he does not remind me of Jesus Christ.” How many good men there are who are really very good men, but who do not remind us of Jesus! No man can really remind us of the Jesus of the Gospel

unless he loves the people, and is loved by the people. I admit the truth of Tennyson's awful impeachment that "the Churches have kill'd their Christ," and that we have presented to the masses of the European peoples all sorts of false Christs, caricatures of Christ. But the real Christ is one who, when seen, attracts the crowd everywhere. Wherever Jesus went He was surrounded by the multitude.

It is only within the last few years that I have noticed the beautiful and significant fact that in nearly every instance in which we find Jesus Christ face to face with the multitude, the Evangelist tells us that He was "moved with compassion." When Jesus Christ saw a crowd His heart yearned over them. He pitied them. When you saw the crowd on Lord Mayor's Day, what was your feeling? When you saw the crowd on Jubilee Day, what was your feeling? If Christ had been in the window of some house in Trafalgar Square, His feeling would have been one of pity. When Jesus Christ saw a great crowd, He was moved with compassion. Mark it well—not with hatred; not with fear. It is the invariable tendency of heathenism, both ancient and modern, to hate and to fear the people. Horace was a fine old Roman gentleman, and a worthy representative of many a fine English gentleman of the present day. Not a few

of those who are found in the West-end clubs of this very city would feel very much at home in the society of Horace. His views and theirs are remarkably alike. Horace honestly enough begins one of his best-known odes with these words: "I hate the vulgar crowd, and keep them at a distance." The illustrious Frenchman, Ernest Rénan, who has a passionate and almost idolatrous admiration for the old Greek civilization, and who, in a memorable passage, bitterly regrets that Paul ever went to Athens to destroy it, acknowledges, in a work now passing through the press, that the Greek civilization, with all its refinement and culture, utterly failed in this: that the thinkers and statesmen of Greece had no compassion for the multitude. Their policy was alternately to bribe and to massacre the masses of the people. Heathen statesmanship had no better method then, and it has no better method now.

The best excuse we can offer for politicians of all classes, and of all sections and positions in society, who either hate or fear the masses of the people, is that they do not know the people. One of the greatest calamities of the existing social condition of this country is that between us—who I suppose all belong to the privileged and fortunate classes—and the masses of the suffering poor there is too often a great gulf fixed.

We know very little of them, and they know very little of us. As one has well said: "Beneath the sea there is another sea." You may be a large employer of labour, but what do you know about the men and women you employ? Between you and them there exists too frequently only what Carlyle, in his grim, vivid way, calls a "cash-nexus." They come on Friday or Saturday for their wages. They get so much money for so many hours' work, paid through a hole in the office window. If you do not want them any longer, you give them notice to quit; and, in the same way, if they do not wish to remain with you, they give you notice.

That is the beginning and that is the end of too much of the existing social relation between Capital and Labour.

And as regards the different sections of English society, in some respects the situation is getting worse and worse; for the strong tendency to-day is for those who are in a better social position to leave the crowded centres and go and live in pleasant suburban villas, where they can have a garden. I do not blame them. It is more healthy. It is an advantage to their wives and children, but it is a very calamitous thing. In London at this moment the poorer districts are growing poorer and poorer, and those who ought to mingle with the

less privileged are several miles off. The Bible says: "*The rich and the poor meet together*"; but they do so no longer. As one has wittily said, in the present day we put the yeast into one pan and the dough into another, and then expect the dough to rise. I am profoundly convinced that this must be altered, and Christians of the privileged class must, in the Spirit of Christ, come back from the suburbs and live among the masses of the people. There is one Christ-like man in the East-end—Mr. Barnett, the Vicar of Whitechapel—who is promoting this. He told me some time ago that several gentlemen of position, who could choose their own residences in wealthy quarters, have, in the most Christ-like spirit, resolved to go down to Whitechapel, to live among the poor. I heard the other day of a shrewd solicitor in Bristol, who came to the conclusion that he was demoralizing his own children by living in Clifton, where they had nothing to do, nothing to resist their natural selfishness, nothing to draw out real sympathy with their less privileged fellow-citizens; and positively for the sake of his own sons and daughters he went back to live in the very centre of crowded Bristol, that they might be taught to be unselfish and Christ-like. And it may be the duty of some of you who hear me now to come back from your suburban residences to live here

with us in the midst of the people and to promote their happiness.

I am quite sure the suspicion and dread which rise in many minds with respect to the masses of the people would disappear if we knew them better. Victor Hugo is right when he says : " Mix with the people and love them, and you will trust them." Do not be afraid of the roaring and advancing tide of democracy. Rush into the midst of it, take a header into it—to use the phrase Mr. Spurgeon employed in this place the other day. Mix freely with the people. It will help to purify you of your innate selfishness, and you will come out of the crowd glowing with the enthusiasm of humanity. This at any rate is true : when Jesus Christ saw the people He had compassion on them. When He looked at Jerusalem He wept over it. Why? Why did the masses of the people excite in the heart of Jesus Christ not hatred, not fear, but deep pity? St. Matthew tells us that when He saw the multitude He was moved with compassion because they were " distressed and scattered "; or, as it is rendered by other scholars, because they were " harassed and neglected."

And that is more true to-day than it was then. The masses of the people even in London are harassed and neglected. They are harassed by the

dogs of hell, who take advantage of their poverty and of their helplessness. Oh, the anguish of the starving poor! It seems to them as though every man's hand was against them. While they are worried, badgered, and harassed by those whom they too frequently meet, they are neglected by you—the wise and the good! Oh, how ignorant they are! how helpless! how miserable! and how often may they truly say in the bitterness of their hearts: "No man careth for our souls"! It is almost impossible for some of us, even by the most desperate effort of the imagination, to enter into the feelings of the suffering and starving poor. I shall never forget the revealing word which my friend, Mr. Henry Broadhurst, uttered to me two years ago. Looking at me as I sat on the other side of his fire-place at Brixton, he said: "Why, you don't know what hunger is. You have never been hungry in your life"; and as I reflected I felt it was true. I had been what we call hungry, but the hunger of the starving poor, who go for days without bread, I had never felt; and I should like to know how many persons there are in this hall to-day who have ever experienced the gnawings of an unendurable hunger. Alas! alas! that in this great London there should be so many thousands whose whole life is absorbed in a desperate attempt to keep their heads just above

water. Oh, the sufferings of the respectable poor, of those of whom you never hear!

I am reminded at this moment of a terrible instance which came under my notice some time ago. A girl who had been a superior servant in a gentleman's house, and had enjoyed comfort and even luxury there, married an artisan in every way worthy of her. In the terrible depression of trade and prolonged distress he was for many months out of work, and gradually all their savings disappeared. They owed many pounds to their landlady, their butcher, and their baker. Nearly all their clothes were pawned, and they shivered in the winter cold. At last came the day when the baker called and said he could not afford to give them any more bread on trust. I know not for how many weeks they owed him then, and it was to his credit that he had given them so much. Yet for the three weeks which preceded that day the whole family had nothing but bread and water. And, oh, my God! that young woman was expecting to be a mother every day, and she knew not what to do. In the most extraordinary manner, doubtless by the intervention of God, my wife was directed to her house, and the case was relieved. But think of the anguish of that poor woman with her starving children! When we saw the man he was half-starved; and he had wandered miles every

day looking for work. Who could enter into the feelings of that poor woman in her time of anguish? She had suffered through no fault of her own; neither was her husband a drunkard. Here was the case of a man seeing his wife and children dying under his eyes. Some people will say, "Why did they not go to the workhouse?" What! Break up their home and have upon them the brand of the pauper?

And what shall we say of these poor girls in London, who are making a living—or, as Miss Rye rightly names it, "a starving"—by earning five shillings a week, and that at the cost of stitching for twelve or fourteen hours every day? I entirely agree with the opinion expressed by my friend, Mark Guy Pearse, this morning, when he said that if this was Christianity, the sooner we got rid of Christianity the better. We may attend prayer-meetings and sing psalms until we are black in the face, but if we do not deal with such social evils we are neglecting our duty. We have too long overlooked the misery of the suffering and starving poor. Who can enter into the feeling of some poor orphan girl of the class to which I have referred? There was, some time ago, in *The Spectator*, a little poem, which attempts to describe the condition of such a girl. Let me read it to you:—

“Left there, nobody’s daughter,
Child of disgrace and shame,
Nobody ever taught her
A mother’s sweet saving name:

Nobody ever caring
Whether she stood or fell,
And men (are they men?) ensnaring
With the arts and the gold of hell!

Stitching with ceaseless labour
To earn her pitiful bread;
Beggings a crust of a neighbour,
And getting a curse instead!

All through the long, hot summer,
All through the cold, dark time,
With fingers that numb and number
Grow, white as the frost’s white rime.

Nobody ever conceiving
The throb of that warm young life,
Nobody ever believing
The strain of that terrible strife!

Nobody kind words pouring
In that orphan heart’s sad ear;
But all of us all ignoring
What lies at our door so near!

O sister! down in the alley,
Pale with the downcast eye,
Dark and drear is the valley,
But the stars shine forth on high.

Nobody here may love thee,
Or care if thou stand or fall;
But the great, good God above thee,
He watches and cares for all.”

And we may add that the man who professes to be a child of that God, but does not "care for all," is deceiving his own soul. He is not the brother of Jesus Christ, who

" . . . into His heart, with large embrace, has taken
The universal sorrow of mankind."

So much depends upon occupying Christ's standpoint. If you are at the standpoint of some doctrinaire political economist, or of some thoughtless writer who has never known what hunger means, you may pour forth column after column of heartless folly. But if you know the suffering of the poor as Christ knows it, you will pity them. Have you ever thought of the tender and charitable meaning of that oft-quoted passage in the book of the prophet Isaiah, where God puts this confession into our lips: "All we like sheep have gone astray"? Like sheep, not like wolves. We are accused of ignorance, of stupidity, of heedlessness, rather than of *malice prepense*, or of downright and deliberate wickedness. There is a great deal more of the sheep than of the wolf in sinners; especially in those who, humanly speaking, have never had a chance; who have been the victims from the very first of unfavourable circumstances; who, in the terrible language of Charles Kingsley, have been "damned from their birth." And, my

dear friend, do not flatter yourself too much if you are better than they. You might have been in their position. That was a wise saying of good John Newton's when he saw a handcuffed man walking along in charge of a constable: "There, but for the grace of God, goes John Newton." If I had to watch my wife and children starving under my eyes, I do not know what I should say in Trafalgar Square. Let us not take too much credit to ourselves for the position we occupy. We owe a great deal more to our circumstances, to our social privileges and safeguards, than we sometimes imagine. The teaching of this Book commends itself to every good man's reason.

We—society at large—must take a big share of the blame for the sin and folly of those who break the law. There was a good old Saxon rule in this country many years ago: when anybody did something wrong in a parish, every parishioner was fined for it—a most excellent rule, founded upon profound reasons. I should like to have it reinforced. As Mark Guy Pearse said this morning, how can you expect virtue and morality from people living in one room? Have you done your best to put the right men in the Vestry and on the Board of Guardians? All our hearts were moved to-day when Mr. Pearse gave us a touching description of the awful circumstances of thousands

of people in London who have to herd together in one room, where common decency is impossible. It can never be "a home." The Vestries will not move in these matters. Too many vestrymen are elected to represent selfish interests. Not a few Christians think that if they attend prayer-meetings they are doing their duty. But let me remind you that you are partially responsible for every unsanitary dwelling in the place where you live. A part of true religion consists in securing laws which will absolutely prohibit such buildings; and in electing to positions of authority men who will not permit them to remain a dead letter.

There are only two alternatives before us to-day—Christianity or revolution. What can we do? A thousand things. If you will come here on Sunday afternoons, I will tell you a few of those things in plain English. At any rate, let us do this one thing. *Let us place ourselves at the right point of view.* Let us look at the masses of the people through the compassionate eyes of Jesus Christ. I felt humiliated a few years ago when I read that it was the duty of every Buddhist priest in Asia to spend some time each day in contemplating the misery of mankind, in order that his sympathy might be aroused. It occurred to me that I should do well to imitate the Buddhist priest in that. Let us reserve some sacred moments

every day to contemplate, through Christ's compassionate eyes, the sin and the misery of mankind. When our hearts are moved we shall soon discover some method, great or small, of relieving that misery and that sin. Then assuredly, as we were reminded by the Lesson, an hour will come when the voice of Christ will say: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the homeless poor in Trafalgar Square, or unto one of the down-trodden harlots in Piccadilly, ye did it unto Me."

II.

JESUS CHRIST AND SOCIAL DISTRESS.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
November 6th, 1887.*

II.

JESUS CHRIST AND SOCIAL DISTRESS.

"They have no need to go away ; give ye them to eat."—ST. MATT.
xiv. 16.

LAST Monday I received a letter from an excellent Christian gentleman, who said that he went away from this Hall last Sunday afternoon "very much grieved." He was delighted to see so large a congregation : he rejoiced at the opportunity which was given me of preaching the Gospel. But instead of "preaching the Gospel," I talked about the duty of citizens to elect vestrymen who would close unsanitary dwellings, and otherwise discharge their public functions : and as the result he adds that it is only too possible that some who heard me, and might have been saved, are now "in hell suffering the torments of the damned." I feel extremely thankful to that good man for giving me such sincere advice, and I have the deepest sympathy with him. Twenty years ago I should have said just the same thing if I had come to this Hall and heard any minister talk as I talked

last Sunday. There is no doubt that my correspondent, who is probably a much better Christian than I am, represents thousands of some of the best Christians in England; and yet I say deliberately that I come here, on Sunday afternoon, to argue before you, before the open Bible, and before Jesus Christ, that the view which my correspondent holds is *one of the most dangerous ever entertained by Christian men*; that it was the main reason why the French Revolution became a Reign of Terror; and that it is now the principal cause of the menacing advance of atheistic Socialism, Communism, and Nihilism in Europe.

Not that I under-estimate the importance of the kind of preaching that he wishes to have on every occasion that a Christian minister opens his mouth. Once only during the whole week do I propose to deal specially with the Social aspects of Christianity. If every day of the week and twice on Sunday we preach the Gospel even to his satisfaction, may I not be permitted for this one brief hour, without neglecting any other duty of my sacred office, to deal with that public application of the Gospel which has been so long and so perilously neglected by those who are the followers of Jesus Christ? Ever since I was a boy one fact has distressed me more than any other—the fact that the masses of the European peoples are alienated from

the Gospel, and that the men on the Continent do not go to any place of worship. When I have contemplated the extraordinary career of such men as Garibaldi, who excited boundless enthusiasm among the masses of the people wherever he went. I have said to myself: How is it that this boundless enthusiasm is directed towards Garibaldi and not towards Jesus Christ? I hold that everything that was true and helpful in the teaching of Garibaldi may be found in the teaching of Jesus Christ; and that all his sympathy with the masses of the people and his desire to promote the progress of the human race are to be found in the teaching of the Prophet of Galilee.

I have long been persuaded that the reason why the masses of the people have to so great an extent failed to realize that their best friend is Jesus Christ, is the fact that we ministers of religion have taken the very course which my excellent correspondent urged upon me last Monday. We have dealt too exclusively with the individual aspect of the Christian faith. We have constantly acted as if Christianity had nothing to do with business, with pleasure, and with politics; as if it were simply a question of private life and of prayer-meetings. It is because the spirit of Christ has not been introduced into public life that Europe is in a perilous condition to-day. I have often

thought how distressing it was that so great and illustrious a man, and so devout a believer in God, as Mazzini should have deliberately rejected the Christian religion on this ground: That he believed Christianity taught men to be selfish; that it taught them to be so absorbed in their own individual salvation, and to be so wrapped up in thoughts of the future that they neglected their duty on earth. Now, I absolutely deny that this is the case. I protest that it is contradicted by history. I contend that everything that is best in Mazzini himself is due to Christ. We have been so accustomed to breathe a Christian atmosphere that very few of us have any conception of the intolerable condition of the human race when Jesus Christ came. But so gifted a man as Mazzini would never have made such a terrible mistake unless we Christians had neglected to declare that the teaching of Christ was applicable to every phase of life.

I recently received an excellent letter from a member of the Society of Friends, and you will not be surprised to hear that he wishes me to speak on the subject of war. Most assuredly I shall on no distant occasion. I was very much struck by one remark in that letter. This good man said he thought it was high time that Christianity should become "an applied science." My wish is to apply

Christianity to every aspect of life. Christianity is not something that has to do with a mere fragment of our existence. It has to do with us as men of business and as citizens quite as much as it has to do with us in our private life; and there are endless ways in which we can preach the Gospel in addition to holding prayer-meetings and delivering what may be called sermons. In *The Methodist Times* this week there is published a remarkable communication with respect to some heroic work that my truly Christian friend, Mr. Frederick N. Charrington, has been doing in the East End of London. He began his career as a thorough-going Christian in a very remarkable way. When he was converted to God he was a brewer. He started a Bible-class, and one day it occurred to him that it was very inconsistent that he should try to reclaim with a Bible-class on Sunday the men who were made drunk with his beer on Saturday. Thereupon, without hesitation, that brave young man, for the sake of Christ and the human race, sacrificed £80,000.

Now, it seems to me that this was a far finer exhibition of true Christianity than the exhibition that took place in London some time ago, when citizens of this so-called Christian city were rushing furiously through the streets of London, terribly afraid that they would be too late to secure shares

in Allsopp's Brewery. Having surrendered that £80,000, Mr. Charrington began his heroic work in the Mile End Road. Within the last few weeks he has deemed it to be part of his duty as a Christian man to put the Criminal Law Amendment Act in force, and he has closed forty of the most infamous houses in that part of London. Now, I say that by closing all these houses Mr. Charrington has done much more good than if he had merely held numerous prayer-meetings. While referring to this Act, let me remind you that it is a mighty weapon which we owe to those fearless Christians, Mr. W. T. Stead and Rev. Benjamin Waugh, and it is a weapon which any man may take into his own hand, and use with decisive effect. Let everybody know that under this Act the landlord, the owner, the manager, and the keeper of bad houses are all liable to imprisonment; and wherever you have a few brave Christians prepared to put the new law in force the vestibules of hell may be closed.

Mr. Charrington told my representative that the Vestry of Mile End had refused to enforce the law. If the excellent Christian who wrote to me is present, I beg his special attention to that fact. Here is an illustration of the importance of putting Christian men in the Vestry. There are a number of publicans in that Vestry; and, as everybody

knows, the unhappy harlots are the best customers of the publicans. There have been, in all parts of the country, instances where infamous houses have actually belonged to town councillors and vestrymen. Is it not time, I ask, that a Christian minister should say it is part of our duty as citizens to see that in all our Vestries and other local assemblies men are elected who do not fear the face of man, and who are ready to do their duty loyally to their country and to their God? Let me give another illustration of the necessity of including the Vestry in our conception of Christianity as an applied science. That zealous philanthropist, Mr. Arnold White, has interested himself very much in the condition of the London poor. He made some investigations a few months ago with respect to the sugar, the tea, and the butter with which the East End poor are supplied, often at a very much greater cost than we pay for ours in the West End. The result of his investigations was that in some instances the sugar was not sugar, the tea was not tea, and the butter was not butter. I bring no sweeping charges against small tradesmen as a class, but I do say that the Adulteration Acts are not enforced. Mr. White states in print that in some cases the reason is that the vestrymen are themselves interested in preventing those Acts from being enforced.

The Royal Commission which sat a short time ago, with the Prince of Wales as its President, to consider the condition of the poor, reporting with respect to unsanitary houses, stated that we actually had in existence to-day, laws under which every miserable tenement in London might be closed. Why are they not closed? Because the Christians have not looked after the Vestries: and the time has come, and more than come, when we must pray God to give us grace to discharge our duty in public as well as to say our prayers in private. If we needed any proof that Christians should give their attention to these duties as well as to prayer-meetings and to holiness meetings, we might find it in the career of one of the most illustrious evangelical Christians that ever adorned the pages of Christian history—the late much lamented Lord Shaftesbury. Only the other day I came across a very remarkable sentence in the first speech he ever delivered in proposing his first Factory Act in 1833. If there ever was a devoted, evangelical Christian who cared for the souls of men, Lord Shaftesbury did. The gentleman who wrote me, I may here mention, talked throughout his letter about “souls,” “dealing with souls,” “saving souls,” and so on. I might have settled the matter by saying that I had no disembodied “souls” in my congregation, but

that I had souls incarnate, souls attached to bodies, and that we must deal with man as a complex being. If I had a congregation of disembodied souls who had no physical wants and no connection with London, I might take a very different course. But there is too much truth in the saying I have often quoted of late that "some very earnest Christians are so diligently engaged in saving *souls* that they have no time to save *men* and *women*."

But to return to Lord Shaftesbury. On that memorable occasion he said: "The Ten Hours Bill is a great religious question, for it involves the means of thousands and tens of thousands being brought up in the faith and fear of the God who created them. I have read of those who sacrificed their children to Moloch, but they were merciful people compared with the Englishmen of the nineteenth century. So long as these facts were not known the guilt attached to the proprietors; but if this terrible system is permitted to continue any longer, the guilt will descend on the whole nation." So said Lord Shaftesbury, and I echo his words. Now that the social misery of the people has been once more brought home to us all by the invaluable service of the public press, we are all in our degree responsible for it. Who can estimate the blessings that have followed the

Factory Acts? A short time ago I went down to the Pottery district, and was told of the unspeakably degraded condition in which men, women, and children lived before the law of England protected the weak against the greedy and the strong: and I say that when Lord Shaftesbury, as a devout believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, persuaded this country—amid the opposition of John Bright and a great many sincere friends of the people who did not understand the bearings of the question—to decide that all over England the weak and defenceless should be protected by these Acts, he did more to establish the kingdom of Jesus Christ than if he had merely spent his time in preaching thousands of what my critic would call Gospel sermons.

I should like to know, indeed, what is the “good news” of the Gospel? Is it selfish individualism? I emphatically deny it. This afternoon we had occasion to refer to the song with which the angels from heaven saluted the birth of Christ. They sang of “Peace on earth, goodwill among men.” They evidently thought Christ had come into this world to reconcile Labour and Capital; and to induce foolish and selfish nations to lay aside their weapons of violence and to dwell together in peace and brotherly love. If my excellent friend who wrote to me on Monday had been with the

shepherds on that occasion he would doubtless have rebuked the angels for referring to "Peace on earth" instead of saying something about souls. I need scarcely tell you that the Apostles, however, were of the same mind as the angels. St. James says that an essential part of pure religion is to visit the fatherless and widows; that is, to show kindness and mercy to those who need it. St. Peter tells us that an essential part of true religion is to honour all men. St. Paul says that the very crown and summit of a good life is to love your neighbour. St. John states emphatically that he who does not love his brother cannot love God. He says, further, that the man who does not positively love his brother hates him.

And when we turn to our blessed Lord and Master Himself, you know how He defined the good Samaritan, and the "brother" and the "neighbour." The good Samaritan said nothing at first to the disabled Jew about his soul. He put him on his ass, attended to his wounds, and paid his hotel bill. What has the excellent gentleman who wrote to me to say to that? The Samaritan's first act was to establish friendly relations, to prove that he was the Jew's true brother, and after that the Jew would be willing to hear him on the subject of spiritual religion.

We come, lastly, to the example which is pre-

sented to us in the text. If you turn to the chapter from which the Lesson was taken, you find this remarkable passage: "Jesus was moved with compassion towards them, and healed their sick." As I reminded you last Sunday, on nearly every occasion on which Christ saw a multitude He had compassion on them. My excellent friend might have said: "Lord, you are losing a great opportunity. What is the body in comparison with the soul? What is the use of healing their bodies?" But the first thing Christ did was to heal their bodies; then He preached to them; then, after He had preached, and when the evening was come, the disciples came to Him, and said: "This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves victuals." But Jesus said: "They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat."

And when we are told that there are thousands and tens of thousands of starving men in this country, are not we too ready to say: "Send them away. Let them go to New Zealand or Manitoba. Let them emigrate"? I do not deny that for many emigration is extremely desirable, but not for all. We must not go to sleep on a pillow of that sort, in utter indifference to the social condition of the masses of our fellow-countrymen. We must not

suppose that when we have said the country is overcrowded we can sit down in comfortable despair, and flatter ourselves that we have discharged our duty. Are you quite sure that the country is overcrowded? Perhaps it has never occurred to you that for every mouth God has created two hands. Of one thing I am profoundly convinced, it will be impossible for us to evangelize the starving poor so long as they continue in a starving condition. I have had almost as much experience of evangelistic work as any man in this country, and I have never been able to bring any one who was actually starving to Christ.

Let us turn to the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Kings, where we find an apt illustration in the case of Elijah when he was flying from Jezebel. Elijah lay down in a surly and cowardly mood under a juniper tree, and as he slept, an angel touched him, and said: "Arise and eat." If the angel had been like our friend who wrote to me on Monday, he would have begun to chide him, and to say: "Now, Elijah, it is very disgraceful to act in that way, and to be cast down, after you have won a glorious victory in the name of the Lord Jehovah. Repent of your sins." That would have been all true. But what the angel did say was: "Arise and eat." It was useless to talk to a starving man in the physical

condition in which Elijah was ; and so we read that when he looked up "there was a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head, and he did eat and drink and laid him down again." The angel of the Lord awoke him a second time. What did he say? Did he say: "You ungrateful wretch! I came and provided you with all your needs here in this wilderness. You are a disgrace to your profession as a prophet"? No; for the second time the angel said: "Arise and eat"; and he did so. Even Elijah was unfit to understand and appreciate the will of God until he had eaten two hearty meals. Now, if that was true of the great prophet of God, is it not even more true of the common-place Londoner, who cannot be expected to have such a conception of his duty as Elijah had? Is it not quite evident that we must deal with every aspect of human nature in order to carry out the teaching of Jesus Christ?

In conclusion, let me ask your attention to an admirable suggestion. A benevolent gentleman, who was here last Sunday, and who is much interested, as I hope we all are, in the social condition of our fellow-citizens, called upon me during the week, and made the following suggestion: Would it not be a blessed thing if we could persuade some of the comfortable and well-to-do classes of the West End to interest themselves personally and directly

in some of the honest, sober, and industrious families in the East End who are poverty-stricken and in need of assistance? Would it not be desirable to ask Christian men and women, heads of houses and their families, to volunteer to "patronize" in the ancient sense of that word involving no humiliation on either side, a particular family; instead of subscribing to some charitable fund which others distribute? Money could be given where money was needed, the girls could be assisted into service, and the boys into business. If Christian households are interested in particular families their sympathies will be more drawn forth; different classes will be brought more together; and the general well-being will be more promoted than by the vague distribution of gifts.

This gentleman has sent me three specimen families, and if there are three gentlemen here who would be prepared to take up these cases we could supplement them by any number. The first is that of a shipwright, who has worked only four weeks since last Christmas. The family at home consists of a boy of fourteen and a girl of ten. Two wretched small rooms are occupied. The rent is 4s. per week; 37s. 6d. rent is due. The wife is consumptive and very ill. The mother and children when visited had not had anything to eat for some time but dry bread. The second case is

that of a coachbuilder doing odd jobs. He has a decent-looking wife and five children, the eldest nine years and the youngest fourteen days. The husband is a sober man, and willing to work. The third case is that of a poor widow, whose husband died two years ago of consumption. He had not earned anything for two years before his death. There are three girls and two boys. The eldest girl is too ill to do anything. One of the younger girls is in consumption, and is expected to follow her father soon. She ought to be in a Home. Four rooms are occupied, the rent of which is 7s. 6d. a week. The family are in great distress. The rooms are very clean. If we could get two or three thousand families to interest themselves in such cases as these, we should be conferring untold blessings on the human race; and at the same time illustrating one of the most splendid methods of "preaching the Gospel."

III.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE LAW OF CHRIST.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
Nov. 13th, 1887.*

III.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE LAW OF CHRIST.

“We must obey God rather than men.”—ACTS v. 29.

AS was announced last Sunday, I propose to begin to-day a study of Greek and Roman society in the time of our Lord. Although at first it might not seem to some earnest Christians very profitable to go back 2,000 years and try by the use of that divine gift—the imagination—to reproduce the social condition of Europe when our Lord came, yet it really is of the greatest importance, and that for two reasons. In the first place, if we can form any idea whatever of the condition of Europe when our Lord was born, we shall be able to realize what He has already done for human society. We shall realize that He has not only saved the souls of millions of individual men, but also made the condition of the human race immeasurably better and happier than it was 2,000 years ago. Perhaps there never was a period in human history when it was more necessary to insist upon what Christ has done for society than it is to-day; because what Christ has done has been

so well done, and so long done, that many of us have no idea that the main blessings of human life in Europe are directly due to Jesus Christ. There are, indeed, some atheists who on the platform and in current literature vainly contend that those social circumstances which make Europe so much better than Asia and Africa are due to heathen civilization, whereas they are entirely due to the influence of Jesus Christ. Our blessed Redeemer ought to have credit for all He has done on earth.

In the second place, there is a fearful perversion of Christianity abroad, which has been illustrated to my knowledge during the last week. One journalist said a few days ago to another journalist, a friend of mine, that we Christians were Christians simply and mainly because we wanted to escape from hell, and because we believe that if we led a Christian life we should get into heaven. I dare say we have sometimes hastily used expressions that may have given rise to this fearful perversion: but I am thankful to know that my journalistic friend replied at once that even if the service of Christ were for this life only we immeasurably preferred to be Christians; that apart altogether from the future, the happiest people in London to-day were the Christian people. Moreover, my friend utterly and indignantly repudiated

as he ought, the assertion that Christianity was a selfish thing.

We believe Christianity is for this world as well as for the world to come. We hold that all the great social blessings which men naturally desire are to be obtained from Christ, and from nobody else. We maintain that every immense improvement in the social condition of the European peoples is due to Jesus Christ, and that therefore the boundless enthusiasm with which the masses of the people have regarded such men as Garibaldi or Mazzini ought to be directed to the Christ; for everything that was true, and good, and kind, and helpful in their teaching and in their influence they derived from Him. Nothing of the sort existed before Christ came. Those who are in the habit of attending these services regularly are well aware that my colleague and I are perpetually protesting against the selfish notions that Christianity is merely some device by which God is going to rescue a handful of us, and that our main business is to save our own souls. As Christians we believe that we must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and we have to seek that down here in the London fogs, not in Paradise.

When you open the pages of history there is no difficulty in discovering that the social condition of

all peoples has already been immeasurably benefited by the influence of Christ and by the leaven of Christianity, and that there is the brightest promise for the future. If Jesus Christ has already been able to do so much, He will assuredly be able to accomplish what yet remains to be done. If He has absolutely destroyed some of the greatest social scourges of the race of Adam, then we may confidently look forward to the time when, by the power of His Holy Spirit, drunkenness, lust, despotism, pauperism, and war will also be utterly destroyed, and when we shall all dwell together in peace and in brotherly love. That is one important reason why I earnestly desire that for a few Sundays you should come here and consider with me the state of the human race when Christ was born.

There is another reason which weighs very much with me. When we come together, and with the assistance of intelligent historians and other authorities find what opinions were current in Athens and in Rome at the birth of Christ, we shall discover the true source and origin of some of the opinions which we read in our daily newspapers and hear on our public platforms; which are uttered in both Houses of Parliament; and which many a Christian, in his simplicity, imagines are of Christian origin: but which are really rank heathenism.

Let us, then, begin our study at once. We turn first of all to the Greek. It is of the greatest importance that we should know what manner of man the Greek was, because he still has tremendous influence. His opinions are impressed in our great public schools and in our universities upon the young gentlemen of England; and now also upon an ever-increasing number of the most gifted of the young women of England. It is a fact—and the more I think of it the more lamentable I feel it to be—that some of the most gifted sons and daughters of England are much better acquainted with the opinions and sentiments and principles of the Greek thinkers than with the teaching of the Bible. Now, many of these young men and women, after going to some of our universities, where they are thoroughly saturated with Greek thought, become the headmasters and headmistresses of our great educational establishments. Others of them begin to write for the London newspapers. Some of these young men go into Parliament, and they reproduce in journalistic literature and in Parliament the opinions and sentiments which they learned, not from Moses, or Isaiah, or Jesus Christ, or Paul; but from Plato and Aristotle.

Our opinions with respect to Society and Politics are so very mixed, are such a strange amalgam of Christianity and heathenism, that many sentiments

which come to us from heathen sources are accepted as being Christian, whereas if we trace them back to their true source they are proved to be absolutely anti-Christian. Who taught them, and what other things their authors taught, we shall be able to see in the light of ancient history. Then we shall appraise them at their right value.

Let us then look at the Greek. The Greek was essentially a citizen, not a man. That is to say, his manhood was lost in his citizenship. The illustrious Döllinger, who by universal consent is the greatest living historical authority, describes the Greek thus: "The sum of his duty was to merge his personality in the State, and to have no will of his own distinct from that of the State." In other words, the State was practically the God of the Greek. His idea of worshipping the gods was very different from yours and mine. He simply thought that certain sacrifices were due to the gods, and when he had offered these sacrifices he had no more to do with the gods than you have with the tax-collector when you have settled with him.

We can well understand why the Greeks treated their gods with a great deal of contempt. Their gods were by universal consent unmitigated scoundrels. Nearly all of them were drunkards, adulterers, thieves, and liars. But thinking that

these gods might worry or injure him, the Greek paid them what was necessary. But the real God of the Greek was his State or his City, and he surrendered himself to his State as absolutely as we surrender ourselves to Jesus Christ. At our Friday night meetings we always say our great business is to make an absolute self-surrender to Jesus Christ, to cry, "Thy will be done"; to give ourselves up freely to Christ; to be altogether at His disposal; to allow Him to direct our thoughts and our actions. Now, the Greek was brought up to surrender himself as absolutely to his State or to his City as you and I are urged to surrender ourselves to our God in Christ; so that it positively came to pass that his only idea of the word "freedom," was the enjoyment of the franchise of a Greek State! You sometimes hear atheists speak of the "freedom" of Athens—Athens, where three-fourths of the citizens were slaves! The word "freedom," in the sense in which you use it, is purely Christian.

The human race never knew what Freedom was until Christ came. The very meaning of the word Freedom, in the sense in which we use that great word, is a meaning of which you find no trace in Greek history. Distinguished men sometimes receive the "freedom" of the City of London, and of other cities. Now, the word freedom meant

nothing more than that to the Greek. He had the right to be a citizen and enjoy all the electoral and other privileges of citizenship. That was the only sort of freedom of which the Greek had any idea. So you can imagine how admirably qualified gentlemen saturated with Greek ideas, are to teach you and me what freedom is! The Greek had no sacred personal rights against the State. It was the universal belief of the Greeks that everything was right, that everything was just, that benefited the State. The Might of the State was Right: whatever the State did was Right.

The Greek knew of no higher law than the law of the land; and whatever the authorities decreed, that, he believed, must be done. From that there was no appeal; and the highest duty of the Greek was to obey the authorities in whatever they told him to do. Hence the State in Greece interfered in all sorts of ways with the private life of the citizens; not for the purpose of preventing a citizen from injuring other citizens, which, we all admit, would be a very legitimate interference, even if it went to the extent of shutting up the public-houses or destroying any trade that injured the public. If the Greek Government interfered with the private affairs of the individual citizen it was not on any such grounds, but because the Greek authorities absolutely denied, and always denied, that

individual citizens had any rights whatever. The citizen was not his own ; he belonged body and soul to the State. The result was that in the Greek cities if a man wanted to marry he had to ask whom he should marry, and under what circumstances he should marry. To such an extent was this carried out, so completely were all the Greek citizens mere creatures of the State, that they had no jurisprudence, no science of law, because there can be no science in anything which has no fixed rules or principles. The only freedom which any Greek ever enjoyed was the freedom of giving his vote in an absolutely unmitigated despotism. Therefore, as I have already said, whatever the law was, whatever the authorities did, was Right.

The foreign policy of every Greek State was determined by the most unscrupulous and selfish interests of the State. No man had any rights whatever against the State ; and no nation had any rights against the State unless it could overcome the State by brute force. Then all right would be on its side. The great Greek historian who is still diligently studied by the young gentlemen of England, said that man's mission is to subjugate his fellow-man by preventing his fellow-man from subjugating him. Have not you read something like that in some of the

London newspapers? Take Pericles, the great statesman of Athens, in the golden age of the Athenian "republic," which was no more a republic, in the modern sense, than the empire of Russia is to-day. A republic, indeed! with one-fourth of the citizens trampling under their feet the remaining three-fourths as mere slaves! I deny the title. No government has any right to be called a republic under those circumstances. I claim that all republics and democracies and commonwealths and constitutional governments are due to the teaching of Jesus Christ. Nothing like personal freedom or political freedom ever existed in Greece. But I was about to say that the great statesman Pericles, whom in many respects we all admire, promoted a hatred of other nations. I have read in the London newspapers similar sentiments respecting France, and Russia, and Ireland, and it may be as well for you to know that the journalists and politicians who propound such sentiments derive their inspiration from Athenian statesmen, and not from Jesus Christ.

It was commonly said by the Greek writers that it was a law of nature that the strong should trample on the weak. Two distinguished representatives of the British Government have just been saying the same thing in India, and pouring the greatest contempt upon the Hindoos because

they do not happen to have as much physical strength as the Mahommedans. It is of the utmost importance to say that, although these gentlemen are representatives of a nominally Christian country, they are not representatives of the teaching of Jesus Christ. My blessed Master must not be held responsible for their Athenian sentiments. So utterly heartless were the Athenians that they positively exterminated entire populations of their fellow-countrymen. They sold women and children as slaves, not in momentary rage, but with cold-blooded deliberation.

We come now to the Romans for a minute. The Roman did not so completely submerge the individual in the State as the Greek did. There was, as we shall discover, a very important Roman jurisprudence. The Roman had some just conceptions of the rights of property. The Roman, however, like the Greek, regarded the law of the State as the supreme rule of conduct ; and acknowledged no higher standard of right, either in home or in foreign policy, than the aggrandizement of his own country.

Now into this Greek and Roman world, saturated with such ideas as I have hastily sketched, came Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. He founded His Church, and immediately a conflict began between His first disciples and the author-

ities. I have to-day read one chapter where, contrary to the principles of the State, and in the teeth of the authorities, Peter, by insisting upon preaching in the open-air—and his preaching, as we learn, was attended by wonderful results—came into conflict with the authorities, who were of the same type as that police magistrate who recently said that the Salvation Army was a nuisance. Of course I fully admit that no preacher should be allowed, by open-air preaching, to obstruct the streets. It is, however, the Constitutional custom of this country that open-air preaching shall be allowed, and if such a custom did not exist it would be necessary to make it. It is the most sacred of all the rights of the poor who cannot attend our indoor services. To them we must go, and to them we will go. But at the time to which I refer the authorities did not recognise any such right.

It really is of great importance to understand that, from a technical legal point of view, the disciples on this occasion were in the wrong. The Roman law which existed in Palestine gave them no authority whatever to preach in the streets of Jerusalem. They were arrested, and put in prison. An angel let them out. Again they went and preached in the open air. Once more they were brought before the magistrates. Then Peter used

the words which I have taken as my text: "We must obey God rather than men." That was a revolution. That was the beginning of a new era. Peter took as his highest standard of conduct, not the law of his country, but the law of God as finally revealed to him in Jesus Christ. If the law of his country was wrong he would break it, and go to prison.

For Peter and for all Christians the law of Christ is the final, supreme law of man. The authority of Christ overrides all other authority. Our highest duty is to obey Him, for He is the voice of absolute Right. I have no time to pursue the subject any further to-day. I simply bring you to this point—that such sentiments as my text expresses were never uttered in Europe till Christ came. And as this fact comes home to us we shall realize more and more to what an extent Jesus Christ has already superseded the selfish thoughts of man; and has taught that which it is the supreme purpose of these afternoon Conferences to enforce—namely, that the laws and policies of States must be subjected to the teaching of Jesus Christ quite as much as the private conduct of individuals.

IV.

*CHRIST THE GREATEST OF SOCIAL
REFORMERS.*

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
November 27th, 1887.*

IV.

CHRIST THE GREATEST OF SOCIAL REFORMERS.

"A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."—ST. LUKE xii. 15.

THE barest justice demands that Christ should have all the glory which we now associate with the word "freedom." Every ancient Government, whatever it called itself, was really an absolute despotism. The Greek had no personal rights whatever against the State. All the State did was "right." There was no higher law than the law of the land, and the law of the land was a law in which the few oppressed the many, and in which the rich despised the poor. If that is no longer the case, it is entirely due to Jesus Christ. The fact is that when Christ came, in the world to which He came, man *as man* was nothing, and had no rights. The State pursued its own selfish and sordid ends without any regard to the sacred personal rights of the individual. Hence war and lust and anguish unspeakable.

We cannot be too frequently reminded that ancient society was founded upon utter contempt

for man *as man*. It is the more necessary that we should insist upon this to-day, because there are some very gifted and sincere, though ill-informed writers, who try to persuade us, and especially try to persuade the young men and young women of our time, that Christianity is essentially a selfish religion, that Christianity has taught men to neglect their human duty, and to be absorbed in a selfish endeavour to escape from hell and to get to heaven. I do not deny that some very sincere Christians may have presented such a caricature of Christianity as that. But when we begin to investigate the question historically, we shall find that apart altogether from the influence of Jesus Christ upon our future, He has already done more for society in Europe than all the great reformers before Him; and that everything in the existing civilization of this country of which we have any right to be proud is due to Jesus Christ. He was the greatest social Reformer the world has ever seen. He did not only more for heaven, but a great deal more for earth than was ever done before. If any of us have formed so mutilated a conception of His teaching as to imagine that the Christian ideal is to save our own souls and neglect our fellow-citizens, so much the worse for us.

Read your Bible with your eyes open, read history with your eyes open, and then you will

see that however fearfully individual Christians may have neglected their duty, Jesus Christ came into this world to save human society as well as to save individuals. Indeed, you cannot effectually save the one without saving the other. I implore you to remember that when Christ came, man *as man* had no rights whatever; and if that was the case even with man, I need scarcely say it was much more the case with woman. There are some in the present day who even dare to tell us that Buddha was more illustrious than Christ. What has Buddha done for woman in comparison with what Christ has done for her? When Christ came, woman was regarded throughout the whole civilized world as a necessary evil, as a slave, as alternately the plaything and the plague of man; and if every man owes so much to Christ, every woman owes a great deal more. In the "good old times" before Christ came, physical force was in the ascendant, and the result was that woman, having less physical strength than man, was everywhere degraded and enslaved.

And if women were infamously treated, much more were children. What has Buddha done for children? In every country where the influence of Buddha prevails, infanticide is practised and sanctioned. So it was in the Roman Empire and in Greece. Take the masterpiece of ancient litera-

ture, the ideal Republic of Plato, which is the special study of every classical scholar. Well, Plato, in his ideal Republic, makes provision, on a gigantic scale, for the murder of superfluous children. Let the men of Europe, and especially the working men of Europe, who have never had the opportunity of individual research, and who are in danger of being misled by the use of such words as "republic" and "freedom," distinctly understand that when Jesus Christ, the greatest of all social reformers, came into this world, there was no protection for the weak, there was no comfort for the sorrowful, there was no effective restraint for the wicked.

Christ came, and the great Revolution began at once. They said of His disciples, soon after His crucifixion, that they were revolutionists, and that they turned the world upside down; and the impeachment was true. They were the greatest revolutionists the world has ever seen. They introduced into human society ideas which had never entered the head of man before, and the only pity is that their revolution has not gone a great deal further. When Jesus Christ came into this world He began to address crowds of poor people in the open air, and to speak of their Father in Heaven. The very fact that He should address the crowd at all, and speak of God as the

Father of every one of them—and we know that there were many publicans and sinners in that crowd—was in itself a revolution. That God should have a fatherly relation and a tender love to everybody was an unheard-of and a most revolutionary idea. Then listen to the positive teaching of Christ as found in such a passage as that which forms my text this afternoon, a passage which states that “A man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth”—that a man’s real life does not consist in the possession of money-bags, or of titles, or of social position.

Why, we do not believe that yet; so revolutionary is the idea, so saturated are we still with the old pagan notions that prevailed before Christ came. If I were to meet you in Oxford Street, and say, “What is Mr. So-and-So worth?” you would instantly begin to think of his banker. You would naturally suppose that I wanted to know how many money-bags he had, believing, like the old heathen, that a man’s worth depended upon the money he possessed. Jesus Christ contradicts that idea. He says that a man’s worth depends upon his mental quality, and yet more upon his moral quality, apart altogether from anything else. And to prove how absolutely unnecessary it is to have plenty of money, Jesus Christ Himself had none. He was one of the poorest men that ever lived,

and yet the very greatest. We have not yet understood the immense significance of the fact that Jesus Christ had no money ; and that He set before us as the Ideal Man a man who had no money. If a man without any money came to some of our magnificent places of worship to-day, we should not give him a seat of honour.

A very observant and gifted foreigner who lately visited this country, went away from England with the conviction that there is no country in the world where poverty is so much despised as it is in England. We may deny that. But perhaps other people are better judges of us than we are of ourselves. This eminent visitor said that in many sections of English society, poverty is practically regarded as a crime. You will remember Mr. Pearse's striking illustration of that widespread notion. He says you often read in Christian biography that such a one was born of "poor but pious parents." Why that "but"? Why do we never read of "rich but pious parents"? Why should our phraseology assume that there is a kind of natural antagonism between poverty and piety? Jesus Christ says that "A man's life consisteth not in the things which he possesseth." Elsewhere He teaches us that a man's real life consists in his relationship to the Father, in his knowledge of God, and in his enjoyment of the love of God.

Therefore we find Christ saying, at the close of the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew, "What shall a man be profited if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his life?" I am glad that instead of the word "soul," in the Revised Version the word "life" is used.

It is not a question of a man's soul at all, as distinguished from his body. It is a question of his true life, his real life, which St. Paul said is "hid with Christ in God." "What shall a man give in exchange for that life?" Suppose he gets all the money in the Bank of England and sacrifices that "life;" suppose he has all the titles of honour the Queen can bestow, and is spiritually "dead;" what shall it profit him? Christ declares that all the prizes of this world are mere refuse in comparison with that life. Now, this was all new. It may seem to you old, but it was all new. It had never been uttered before Christ came. He was the first public teacher in this world who said that man's true worth was to be determined, not by his property, not by his social position, but only and entirely by what he was in himself, by his mind and by his heart; and that there were certain absolute and indefeasible rights that belonged to every individual human being.

Jesus Christ says that every man *as a man* is immeasurably greater than wealth or rank could

ever make him. He was the first teacher of the human race who insisted upon the sacredness and the unspeakable preciousness of every man, woman, and child in the world. I need scarcely tell you the practical results which followed. If every human being, because he is created in the image of God, is so unspeakably precious, how much we ought to reverence every human being, how careful not to infringe upon the rights of any human being, how solicitous for the happiness of every human being. As we have seen in previous Conferences, in the old Greek and Roman world man as man was nothing. They neither revered nor respected manhood. Many of the most gifted men of Greece deliberately murdered thousands of their fellow-creatures—not in ordinary war, but in cold blood—because as men they were without any recognised right or claim.

On the other hand, contrast with this the revolutionary doctrine of Jesus Christ, as found in the passage in which He said: "I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not." And when they expressed their astonishment—for they would never have treated Christ Himself so—He

answered: "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto Me." Let me transcribe that into modern English. A poor little child, shivering and half-naked, asks you for bread. You turn a deaf ear to him. On the day of judgment, Christ will say: "When you refused bread to that little boy, you refused bread to Me." A harlot is dying in a back slum. You say: "What is that woman to me? She suffers for her own sin." When you spurn that harlot you spurn Christ. That harlot is as dear to Christ as the Queen of England herself; and any insult offered to her, any indifference to her happiness, touches Him as deeply as if she were the Princess of Wales.

Christ asserts, as the Son of Man, that every man is His brother; that every woman is His sister. A pauper is dying, and you say: "Nobody cares." Yes; there is One who cares. Jesus Christ cares. He cares as much for that poor pauper as you do for your dearest child. A despairing harlot throws herself over London Bridge, and is drowned. You say, "Nobody cares for her." Yes, Jesus Christ cares for her, and He cares so much that every man who ever injured that woman, unless he repents in sackcloth and ashes, will go to the lowest depths of hell. This is a new thing indeed, because if there was one class in ancient history that was universally despised it was the

class to which that woman belonged. Many of you admit immoral men into your drawing-rooms, while you turn away with hard and cruel hearts from your fallen sisters. How far we are yet from that blissful social condition in which you will all glory, as Jesus Christ gloried, to be known as "the friend of harlots."

We have laid our finger upon the gaping sore of human society. Let us once realize the sacredness of every human being, however poor, however ignorant, however degraded, and tyranny becomes impossible, lust becomes impossible, war becomes impossible. This is the new idea which Jesus Christ introduced into human society. This is the new idea which will ultimately revolutionize human society. It has already given slavery its death-blow. It was not any discovery on the part of political economists that destroyed slavery. It was the discovery that every slave was a man and a brother. Then down went slavery. I look forward to the day when we shall all realize—what very few of us have realized yet, because human society is still to so great an extent heathen—that every individual human being, created in the image of God, is unspeakably dear to God, and must be loved and revered; that the State itself has only a limited authority; that there are higher laws than the laws of the State, even the laws of God;

and that the glory of manhood is unspeakable and Divine, for the Idea! Man is not Adam, but Jesus of Nazareth.

When we begin to regard every human being as the brother or sister of Jesus Christ, how it will alter our conduct! We meet some poor prodigal in rags and in want. He excites within us positive loathing, but we know that the hideous creature is a son or a brother of a dear friend of ours, and for the sake of his father or his brother, we show him every courtesy and every kindness. Allow a similar thought to help you when you are repelled by the degradation or the wickedness of the victims of sin. They are as dear to the heart of God as you are yourself, and neither you nor your country has any right to do anything that will injure them. This is a new idea, among many other new ideas, which Christ came to proclaim and to act upon—an idea so new, so revolutionary, that we do not believe it yet, although Christ has been trying for nineteen centuries to persuade us of its truth. But some day it will be believed, and on that day sin and misery will begin to totter toward their final fall.

V.

*THE CAREER OF THE FIRST GERMAN
EMPEROR.*

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
March 11th, 1888.*

V.

*THE CAREER OF THE FIRST GERMAN
EMPEROR.*

“Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he showed, and how he warred, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?”—I KINGS xxii. 45.

EVERY careful reader of the historical books of the Old Testament must be struck by the way in which inspired writers dismiss the details that crowd the pages of secular historians. Instead of giving us voluminous accounts of sanguinary battles, and of personal squabbles and intrigues, they leave such topics to the mere chroniclers of Court gossip. In the case of Jehoshaphat, for example, the sacred writer stops abruptly at the very point where an ordinary historian would begin to enlarge. Jehoshaphat was a good king; but as for his might and his wars, you are referred for such unimportant details to the uninspired and now long-lost “Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah.” The fact is that there are two opposite methods of writing history. There is the superficial method of the merely mundane writer, who is absorbed by the show and glitter of the passing

pageant, and there is the philosophic method of the Bible, which contemplates all events in their relation to God, and to the Divine Ideal which God has set before the nations.

The late Mr. Green seemed to be the first English historian who had a proper conception of the true object of history. Instead of deluging us with the blood of slaughtered hosts, and wearying us with the miserable intrigues and scandals of high life, he wrote a "history of the English people," and judged all men by their influence upon the life and character of the English people. The Divine ideal for every individual is described in Romans viii. 28, 29. There we are taught that all things work together for "good" to them that love God. St. Paul immediately adds that "good" consists in being "conformed to the image of His Son" Jesus Christ. In other words, the true ideal for every man is to become Christlike. The same ideal is set before every nation. Every ruler and every politician must be judged from this Scriptural standpoint. What has he done to make his people more Christlike? What has he done to bring the laws and policy of his people into harmony with the ethical teaching of Christ? From this point of view we must contemplate the late German Emperor. And, so judged, we shall find nothing more truly admirable in his illustrious

career than the essay which he wrote for his father's eye on the solemn occasion when he was received by the rite of confirmation into the National Church of Germany. I am indebted to *The Times* for the following extract from that memorable essay :—

I rejoice to be a Prince, because my rank in life will give me many opportunities to help others. I am far from thinking myself better than those occupying other positions. I am, on the contrary, fully aware that I am a man exposed to all the frailties of human nature ; that the laws governing the action of all classes alike apply to me too ; and that, with the rest of the world, I shall one day be held responsible for my deeds. To be an indefatigable learner and striver for the good of my country shall be the one aim of my public life.

What could be more wise and high-minded than this? He did well to rejoice in his high rank as giving him unparalleled opportunities of promoting the public good. When birth, and rank, and wealth are used, not as occasions for ignoble pride or base self-indulgence, but as rare and precious weapons with which to smite evil and protect innocence, they are a blessing both to those who possess them and to all the people. Ruskin says truly that the privileged classes are the natural leaders of men, and even in a democratic age like this they might still lead if they were animated by the noble principles of the late Emperor. How excellent and how beautiful is the modesty with

which the young prince recognised the fact that he was as frail and mortal as the rest of us, and that he would some day stand at a Judgment Seat where the Emperor of Germany would be judged like every other man, according to the deeds done in the body.

The extract I have read ought to be printed in letters of gold upon the Emperor's tomb, and his country might add, without flattery, that he honestly endeavoured throughout his long life to live up to the splendid ideal which he set before himself in his early manhood. I humbly venture to believe that I am not one of those degraded ministers of religion who are ready to excuse vice when it is clothed with royal purple, or to pour extravagant eulogies at the feet of the rulers of men. I have, therefore, the greater joy in believing and saying to-day that the late Emperor kept the promise which he made when he entered into the full enjoyment of the privileges of the Christian Church. May God grant that all the young men who hear me now may strive with equal patience and with equal persistence to attain the noble and generous ideals of their youth. I do not for a moment pretend to admire all the acts and the policy of the late Emperor. Before I have done, I shall mention where, as it seems to me, he has conspicuously failed. But, so far as we can judge, he lived up to

the light he enjoyed, and he honestly sought from first to last to obey his God and to serve his beloved Fatherland.

There are, at least, three qualities of his public life which are worthy of our gratitude and of our imitation. In the first place, how *industrious* he was! He, at any rate, lived out Carlyle's gospel of hard work. He did with his might whatsoever his hand found to do. His simple and abstemious habits were an incalculable blessing in a luxurious and self-indulgent age. Both in war and in peace he shared the hardships and the toil of those who served him. A little more of German economy and simplicity in our own public life would be a great gain. In the second place, let us remember that the late Emperor worked hard, not in his own interest, but in obedience to a high sense of *duty* and for the public good. Some men in this city are killing themselves by inches in order to grasp at superfluous wealth with which to imperil and afflict their children. The late Emperor worked as hard as they, but for no unworthy end,—he toiled for the unity and greatness of Germany. In the third place, the real secret of the late Emperor's strength and persistence was his simple, unaffected, *evangelical piety*. No man ever recognised the presence and need of God more openly or more constantly. When, during the Franco-German

war, he ascribed his victories to the mercy of God, infidel journals both in France and in this country sneered at his pious references. But no honest observer could doubt his entire sincerity.

How significant and inspiring was the death-bed scene. The Court chaplain repeated verses of consolation and hope from David and Isaiah. After each of them the Emperor rejoined, "That is beautiful!" When the chaplain exclaimed, "I know that my Redeemer liveth; Christ is the Resurrection and the Life," the dying monarch broke in with "That is right." When, later in the night, his beloved daughter, the Grand Duchess of Baden, asked him if he could hear the words that were read, he answered, "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Once he exclaimed quite spontaneously, when there was a pause of silence, "God has helped me with His name." After further quotations from the Psalms, the Emperor cried out once more, "It is beautiful!"

There are some benighted persons who imagine that all orthodox evangelical Christians are milk-sops. The late Emperor was an impressive proof that the most simple evangelical piety may co-exist with the most masculine virtues of courage, daring, and enterprise. The career of Cromwell ought to have taught all men that. The life of the late Emperor was a striking evidence that the heroic

energies of the Reformation still survive in the Protestant world. The Emperor was a typical specimen of the sturdy German Protestantism which found so characteristic and mighty a voice in Martin Luther. That type of Christianity is vividly expressed in Luther's great hymn. Let me read it to you in Carlyle's translation, which preserves in so remarkable a degree the force and ruggedness of the original :—

“A safe stronghold our God is still,
A trusty shield and weapon ;
He'll help us clear from all the ill
That hath us now o'ertaken.
The ancient prince of Hell
Hath risen with purpose fell ;
Strong mail of craft and power
He weareth in this hour ;
On earth is not his fellow.

With force of arms we nothing can,
Full soon were we down-trodden ;
But for us fights the proper Man,
Whom God Himself hath bidden.
Ask ye who is this same ?
Christ Jesus is His name,
The Lord Sabaoth's son ;
He, and no other one,
Shall conquer in the battle.

And were this world all devils o'er,
And watching to devour us,
We lay it not to heart so sore ;
Not they can overpower us.
And let the prince of ill

Look grim as e'er he will,
He harms us not a whit :
For why? His doom is writ ;
A word shall quickly slay him.

God's word, for all their craft and force,
One moment will not linger,
But, spite of hell, shall have its course ;
'Tis written by His finger.
And though they take our life,
Goods, honour, children, wife,
Yet is their profit small ;
These things shall vanish all ;
The city of God remaineth."

I admit that the gospel of Luther's hymn is not the Gospel according to St. John, which we of this Mission specially love. It is not even the Gospel according to St. Paul. But it is the Gospel according to St. James, who was the brother of our Lord and a holy apostle. At certain periods of human history the strong, stern, practical teaching of St. James is specially needed. At all periods it has its important place in this many-sided world.

Before I close let me utter a note of warning against the plausible misuse of the deceased Emperor's career which the advocates of militarism are already making. "There," they are saying, "nothing succeeds like a blood-and-iron policy. All this chatter about peace and brotherly love is mischievous nonsense. Men cannot be ruled by love. You must have a strong army, and all will

be well. God is on the side of the big battalions." The first Napoleon said that, but he lived to discover that his "big battalions" could not avert the irreparable disasters which fitly closed his infamous career. The life of the late Emperor, when clearly understood, teaches the exact opposite of the doctrine which the advocates of militarism try to found on it. It must not be forgotten that the late Emperor fought with four adversaries, but that he defeated only two of them. He fought with Austria and won. He fought with France and won. But he fought also with the Pope and with the Socialists, and did not win.

When blood and iron are opposed to blood and iron, they may be the instruments which enable the right side to win. But when we have to contend with religious or political convictions, we must employ very different weapons. The Emperor defeated Austria because Austria then represented domestic despotism of the most detestable character. The overthrow of Austria was one of the greatest blessings that the God of freedom and justice ever granted to the long-afflicted people of Central Europe. Again, the late German Emperor defeated France, because France then represented foreign despotism as odious as that of Austria. The overthrow of the corrupt and lascivious Bonapartist adventurers was an immense

service to the whole world, and, above all, to France. So far, the sword of the German Emperor, like the sword of Washington and the sword of Cromwell and the sling of David, was the instrument permitted by God to crush cruelty and oppression. But when the German Emperor tried to conquer the Pope by force, his weapon was blunted in his hand, and he suffered an ignominious defeat. As an evangelical Protestant, my sympathies were, of course, with the Emperor; but the end does not justify the means, and the pure primitive Gospel can never be advanced at the point of the sword. Peter made that mistake, and we know how sternly our Lord rebuked him; and how promptly He bade him replace his sword in his scabbard.

There is only one way of defeating the Pope, and that is to be a more Christ-like Christian than he is, and to offer to mankind a more complete and divine Gospel. To put priests in prison is only to make them martyrs, and to increase their influence. Cromwell tried to crush Romanism in Ireland by brute force, and he only succeeded in making Ireland the most intensely Roman Catholic country in Europe. Christ absolutely disclaimed the use of force for the extension of His kingdom. The only result of the late Emperor's fatal blunder was to paralyse the Old Catholic movement, and to make the Pope stronger in Germany than ever. The

only way to convert Roman Catholics is to melt their hearts with love, and then to convince their minds with the Word of God.

The other colossal mistake of the late Emperor was his attempt to suppress Socialism by military force. He declared whole cities in a state of siege, he suppressed newspapers, he dispersed public meetings, he imprisoned members of Parliament. What was the result? The Socialist vote increased at each successive election. You can never put down political convictions by a blood-and-iron policy. Socialism may be illogical and mischievous, but unless and until Socialists proceed to overt and unconstitutional acts, you will only assist them and swell their ranks by persecuting them. Sane and unprejudiced public men have long agreed that all attempts to prevent free speech are mischievous. It may be very annoying and wearisome to argue with men whom you regard as wicked or misguided agitators. But you cannot put them down by brute force so long as they attempt no actual breach of the peace. You must lovingly argue with them, and show them their folly.

Men are open to argument, unless you begin by outraging their sense of justice. Further, it must be said that it will be impossible to arrest the Socialistic propaganda unless we infuse into our

public life that deep and intense sympathy with the poor which Colonel Duncan, of Finsbury, so wisely demands. Unless you can persuade the masses of the people that you pity them, and sympathise with them at least as much as the Socialists do, they will be more and more inclined to accept the Socialist creed. All subversive political parties thrive upon social misery. Remove the causes of social misery, and you destroy the roots of social discontent. Force is no remedy. The compassion of the good Samaritan is the remedy.

We may find further evidence of these great Scriptural truths in the sequel of the Franco-German war, especially when we contrast it with the sequel of the war with Austria. When Austria was overthrown, the German Emperor was greatly tempted to annex Bohemia. But the sagacity of Prince Bismarck saw that the annexation of Bohemia would be a perpetual cause of Austrian hatred. After a severe struggle, in which Prince Bismarck was obliged to threaten resignation, the King of Prussia gave way, and Bohemia was restored to Austria. What was the result of that magnanimous policy? Why, that ill-will ceased. Austria nobly accepted her new position, and in a few years Austria became the warm friend of Germany, and all cause of suspicion on either side died away. How different, alas! was the sequel

of the war with France. Then, again, to his eternal honour, Prince Bismarck did his utmost to prevent the annexation of Lorraine. But this time the Emperor was supported by Von Moltke and the military party, and Prince Bismarck was defeated. The result which he foresaw has come to pass. The violent seizure of purely French territory has left an open sore, which time cannot heal. If the magnanimous policy which had prevailed with Austria had been repeated with France, the same happy result would have followed. The great and gifted French people are quite as capable as the Austrians of appreciating magnanimous and conciliatory conduct.

What has Germany gained by annexing French territory? Eighteen years of suspicion, hatred, misery, and unendurable military burdens. She would have been ten times richer, stronger, and happier to-day, if in the hour of her great victory she had exhibited more of the mind of Christ. We all pray very earnestly that the life of the new German Emperor, Frederick III., may be spared, and that his well-known humanity and love of peace may exercise a beneficent influence over the counsels of Europe.* But he will indeed make

* The infinite and omniscient love of God has answered our prayers otherwise than we had hoped.

himself illustrious, immeasurably more illustrious than he could ever be made by another Sadowa or another Sedan, if he avails himself of his great opportunity to conciliate France. A soft answer will turn away wrath. He can hold out a hand of friendship and peace without any loss of dignity, without any imputation of an unworthy motive. Let him treat France as kindly and as wisely as his father treated Austria. Then the greatest peril of the united German people will pass away for ever. We close our review of the most successful military career of our time with the conviction, that instead of sanctioning or encouraging those who delight in war, it is really, when viewed narrowly and viewed as a whole, a fresh and striking proof of our great Master's doctrine that "the meek shall inherit the earth."

VI.

*GENERAL GORDON'S IDEA OF CHRIS-
TIANITY.*

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday afternoon,
March 25th, 1888.*

VI.

GENERAL GORDON'S IDEA OF CHRISTIANITY.

"Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him, and he in God."—1 JOHN IV. 15.

GENERAL GORDON was one of the most heroic and impressive characters of our time. Few have so deeply stirred the hearts and imaginations of men. It is interesting and instructive to examine his idea of Christianity. I am far from endorsing some of his views. His fatalism, his universalism, and his materialistic sacramentarianism are, it seems to me, entirely unscriptural. But when a bee lights upon a lovely flower, it does not trouble itself about the dust which may have accumulated upon the petals, or about the obnoxious insects crawling to and fro on the leaves. It collects all the sweet honey it can find, and flies away. In like manner, leaving on one side the controversial and subordinate notions of General Gordon, let us gather what spiritual honey we can from his brave and devout life. Nothing throws a more vivid light upon a man's character and convictions than his favourite quotations.

Now, we learn from General Gordon's letters to his sister, which have just been published, that he had three favourite quotations. The first was from the Book of Proverbs: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Prov. iii. 5, 6). That was Gordon's rule of conduct, and it was the subject of our Conference last Sunday afternoon. Another quotation which was constantly on his lips was from a hymn—

"Oh! ask not then, How shall I bear
The burden of to-morrow?
Sufficient for the day its care,
Its evil and its sorrow.
God imparteth by the way
Strength sufficient for the day."

That verse reveals Gordon's melancholy and his tendency to a kind of pessimism. We will examine that aspect of his character next Sunday afternoon—the afternoon of the great day of the Christian year. In the glorious light of the Easter triumph we shall find no place for the cloud that sometimes shadowed the thoughts of General Gordon. To-day we turn our attention to the third of his favourite quotations, our text. We learn now, for the first time, that General Gordon attached the very highest importance to the words of St. John which I have read to you. This verse

declares, in his judgment, and, I may add, in mine the very essence of the Christian religion. In 1867 he wrote: "I am more than ever convinced that the secret of happiness and holiness is in the indwelling of God. I think it is the key to much of the Scripture." In 1883, when he was on the eve of his last and tragical mission to Africa, he wrote often and exultingly of our bodies as the temples of God, and spoke in his strong and epigrammatic way of "man as the incarnation of the Holy Ghost."

Gordon held that God—that is, Christ; that is, the Spirit of Christ—is in every man, but that only those who "confess" Christ are "conscious of" the indwelling presence of God. He argued in this way: Man is naturally fallen, and has no good thing in himself. Whatever good thing is in him must, therefore, be due to the presence of God in him, even though he may be so unconscious of the indwelling and inspiring presence of God as to consider himself an atheist. To express this in another way, he held that no man can do any good thing without the quickening Spirit of God. Gordon practically regarded the whole human race as a living organism, a gigantic man, of which Christ is the Head. You will remember how the same idea is expressed by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians xi. 3: "The head of every man is Christ."

The learned Bishop of Gloucester observes in his recently-published Commentary on this Epistle that by "man" in this clause St. Paul does not mean merely "Christian man," but every man absolutely.

Those who are familiar with the ideas of the Positivist school will know how fond the followers of Comte are of this beautiful illustration of the solidarity of the human race. But they have no head for the living organism. They reduce the race of Adam to a headless and incomprehensible trunk.

Gordon, on the other hand, echoing the great conception of St. Paul, regarded the whole human race as Christ's body, in which Christ still lives and toils and suffers on earth. In 1881 he wrote: "The more we reflect on it, the more we shall believe that our Lord, even now, is Man as He was when here; that He can be well pleased and grieved now as He could then; that He is in reality suffering from sickness and sorrow in the slums of the world, in the bodies of His members; and that to administer to them is to administer to Him and rejoice His heart, even as our hearts at times rejoice." In a similar strain he writes again in the same year: "I hope (D.V.) to put myself in communication with some of our Scripture-reader people, and shall try and visit Christ,

who is in the East End in the flesh." Gordon justifies these last startling words by referring to the well-known utterance of our Lord: "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these My brethren, even these least, ye did it unto Me."

How can we resist General Gordon's conclusion? Our Lord distinctly declared that any kindness shown to the starving poor, to the friendless, to the sick, and to the criminal classes, will be regarded as a personal kindness to Himself, so absolutely does He identify Himself with the most miserable and the most wicked of men. In another letter Gordon expresses the same idea in the following terms: "A kind word to a crossing-sweeper delights Christ in him, as much as it would delight Christ in a queen." Every one will realize with what new dignity and new hope this conception clothes each individual life. If the Spirit of Christ is in every man, seeking to save, we need not despair even of the most degraded and abandoned. So long as Christ is in that man or that woman, all may yet be well. The hidden Light may dissolve the darkness in which it is enveloped. The sacred fire of Divine love may yet triumph over the coldness of death.

Again, this conception of the relation of every man to Christ gives new importance and new sacredness to "the service of man," which becomes

literally "the service of God." Some of us have often been tempted to lament that we did not live nineteen centuries ago. "Ah," many a heart has exclaimed, "if I had only lived in Galilee when Jesus lived there, I would not have deserted Him, I would have found heaven in ministering to His daily need." My friend, if there is any truth in what General Gordon, and St. Paul, and the Master Himself have said, that is a quite unnecessary regret. You may minister to Christ quite as literally to-day as if you had lived in Galilee long ago. Every kindness that you show to the drunkards of the Regent Street slums, to the harlots of Piccadilly, and to the starving poor everywhere, is a kindness shown to Jesus Christ.

Christ is in every man ; but, said Gordon, every man is not "conscious" of it ; or, as I should prefer to say, every man is not "in Christ." St. Paul speaks of certain kinsmen who were "in Christ before" he was (Rom. xvi. 7). We have to realize, to complete, to perpetuate our union with Christ. How ? I think General Gordon would have replied that we are to do that by participating in the Holy Communion. He ultimately developed a most exaggerated and even grotesque sacramentarianism. If he or any one else said that we were to develop our life in Christ by participating in the Holy Communion "worthily," that additional word

would make all the difference, and I could accept it. Everything depends upon the intention and attitude of soul with which we receive the sacrament. After all, the bread and wine are merely a symbol of reality ; and the symbol may be used without the reality, just as the reality may exist in a Quaker without the symbol.

Take a parallel illustration—the use of the ring in marriage. If the ring is used as the symbol of a union to which there is no legal or moral impediment, it is the expression of a most sacred and blessed fact. But I have known profligate men who have placed a wedding ring on the hands of their abandoned mistresses. In that case the sacred symbol with all its hallowed associations, was a lie and a snare. In like manner the outward act of receiving the bread and wine may mean much or less than nothing. We cannot rest in the outward form. Since I came to St. James's Hall I have had conversations with inquirers who have been regular communicants in Christian Churches for years, but who, so far from being real Christians, have never even known how to utter a genuine prayer to God.

If the sacrament is received intelligently and worthily ; if it is the outward expression of an inward act and dedication of the soul ; if we then and there feed upon Christ in our hearts by faith,

it is the central act of Christian worship, and the highest and most blessed of all the means of grace. But if it be a mere physical and conventional act, then, truly, "he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself" (1 Cor. xi. 29). What, then, must we do in order to realize and complete our union with Christ? What is that real act of the soul of which the Lord's Supper is the outward and visible sign? What must we do in order that we may be "in Christ," as Christ is "in us"? We cannot express our part in the blessed consummation better than in the familiar words of our Lord Himself. We must "abide" in Him. You remember how He illustrates our relation to Himself by the vine and its branches. We must abide in Him as the branch abides in the vine.

We must *identify* ourselves absolutely with Him. We must have no will, or purpose, or object in life, apart from Him. We must yield ourselves unconditionally, altogether to Him; so that we may no longer have any existence separate from Him; so that, as St. Paul says, we may no longer live, but He may live in us. General Gordon expresses this very clearly. Writing in 1862, he says: "To be like Christ we must not only have our will subordinated to His, but be delighted to have it so, and even seek it." "It is to be counted

an idiot, an idealist, an impossible sort of person, a theorist, an indiscreet person, an (apparent) condoner of evil, an enthusiast, a mean-spirited person. It is not prayer-meetings, or church-going, or parish-visiting." "Endeavour to realize your identity with and absorption in Christ; endeavour to realize what He as man feels for us; endeavour to grasp His feelings, His power over all things in heaven and earth, for we are entirely one with Him in all things, and He with us. We are partners with Him for weal and woe. He needs you as much as you need Him."

In these sentences General Gordon proves how absolutely all real Christians are agreed on the essential questions; however widely they may differ with respect to the precise meaning of the Sacrament and to subordinate questions of ecclesiastical polity. Let me conclude by putting this fundamental truth in a more familiar form. We must all choose between self and Christ. We can live to self, or we can live to Christ. Which shall it be? Because Christ is "in us," we can live to Him. His indwelling Spirit gives us power to live no longer to ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and rose again. On the other hand, we may refuse to be "in Christ," we may live to please ourselves, to do what is right in our own eyes, to lean unto our own understanding, to go our own

independent, lawless, self-assertive way. Many of you remember the beautiful and striking words by which the saintly Theodore Monod describes the great change in his life from self to Christ. Let me quote them :—

“Oh ! the bitter shame and sorrow
That a time could ever be
When I proudly said to Jesus :
‘*All* of self, and *none* of Thee.’

Yet, He found me ; I beheld Him
Bleeding on the accursed tree ;
And my wistful heart said faintly,
‘*Some* of self, and *some* of Thee.’

Day by day His tender mercy,
Healing, helping, full, and free,
Brought me lower, and I whispered :
‘*Less* of self, and *more* of Thee.’

Higher than the highest heaven,
Deeper than the deepest sea,
Lord, Thy love at last has conquered :
‘*None* of self, and *all* of Thee !’ ”

God grant that we all may thus fully “abide in Christ,” so that we may be able to say with St. Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me.”

VII.

“ROBERT ELSMERE” AND MR. GLADSTONE'S CRITICISM OF THE BOOK.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Evening,
May 6th, 1888.*

VII.

“ROBERT ELSMERE” AND MR. GLADSTONE'S CRITICISM OF THE BOOK.

“He that hath the Son hath the life ; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.”—I JOHN v. 12.

ACCORDING to public announcement, I am to speak this afternoon of the remarkable book which is exciting so much interest in literary circles, and of which Mr. Gladstone has written an equally remarkable review in *The Nineteenth Century*. Mr. Gladstone says that “this book is eminently an offspring of the time, and will probably make a deep, or, at least, a very sensible impression ; not, however, among mere novel readers, but among those who share, in whatever sense, the deeper thought of the period.” I entirely share Mr. Gladstone's estimate of the book. Like him, I am, of course, unable to accept its main teaching, and I shall be compelled to offer some serious objections to it. I am, therefore, the more anxious, at the very outset, to bear my strong testimony to the high qualities, both literary and moral, of its gifted writer, and especially to mention the candour

with which she has exhibited the heartless selfishness of some sceptics, as well as the deep insight into human character which distinguishes so many parts of the book. *The Times* classes it among the "clever attacks upon revealed religion," and when we remember Mrs. Humphry Ward's intimate relations with that newspaper, we may conclude that this description is not inaccurate. Yet I scarcely think she would care to put it in that way herself.

To me it is very interesting—first, because it is a faithful and vivid revelation of the literary scepticism of our time; and, secondly, because it is an explicit statement of the best attempt at religious reconstruction yet made on the sceptical side. I have also a certain personal interest in the book, because I had a slight acquaintance with several of the Oxford men who are supposed to have suggested the principal characters. I was one of the earliest admirers of Robert Elsmere's historical genius. I used to hear the Provost of St. Anselm's discourse on Aristotle. I have probably attended the lectures of Mr. Langham at Balliol. I once had a singular correspondence with Squire Wendover. And as to Mr. Grey, the great hero of the book, I knew him, and loved him as all who knew him loved him. I heard the last course of prelections he delivered at Balliol. I

believe the very last public lecture he ever gave was given in my own schoolroom, to a humble literary society of young Methodists. Such was the broad sympathy and such the unselfishness of the man that, even after what proved to be his fatal illness had begun, he dragged himself forth to fulfil his engagement with us. At his funeral, vividly described in this book, I was one of the sincerest mourners. And, as a further illustration of the universal affection which he evoked, I may add that I was, on that occasion, accompanied by all my ministerial colleagues and by all the lay representatives of my church. Mr. Grey is the name given to the late Professor Thomas Hill Green.

Mrs. Humphry Ward's book may be described as a lengthy tract written in the interests of the religious teaching of Professor Green. I well remember Mr. Green's last prelection. The ethics it vehemently enforced were precisely those which, in other terms, I propound here every Friday night. It was what we Methodists call Entire Sanctification, or Christian Holiness, or Perfect Love. It was the ethics of St. John without the theology of St. John. But can we retain the ethics of St. John without the theology of St. John—in one word, without the Divinity of Jesus Christ? That is *the question*. That, as Mr. Gladstone says in his review, is “the real hinge of the whole question.”

It may appear to be possible to separate the ethics of Christianity from its doctrines when we think of such a man in our own day as Professor Green, and of such a man in a recent age as the devout Unitarian Channing. But both of these Christ-like men were unconscious Christians, who really believed a great deal more than they distinctly formulated. They believed in God the Father as He is revealed in Christ, and as He can be known only in Christ. Robert Elsmere, in his first address to the working men in the East End of London, states that he "places his whole trust, for life and death, in God the Father Almighty." Now, no one but a Christian at heart ever did that. The Fatherhood of God was never clearly revealed until Christ came; and is never properly realized now, except by Christians.

The theological position eloquently and passionately advocated by Mrs. Ward is quite untenable. It is an impossible compromise. Squire Wendover, who is a wide-awake and thorough-going sceptic, says truly to Elsmere: "You are playing into the hands of the Blacks." By "the Blacks" he means the parsons. "All this theistic philosophy of yours only means so much grist to their mill in the end." The shrewd old cynic was quite right. Mrs. Ward goes either too far or not far enough. She believes too much or too little. It

is impossible for the human intellect to stop long at that point. It will either advance to Christianity or recede to Agnosticism. Mr. Grey taught that "God, consciousness, and duty are the only realities." But those who accept the principles and tendencies of modern scepticism make quite as short work of this triad as of the Trinity. Elsmere expresses his mind in slightly different terms. He declares his belief in "God, love, and the soul." But Renan has already degraded "love" into animal lust, and as for the "soul," what sceptic tolerates its existence for a moment? All these things are logically and absolutely rejected by the consistent disciples of the sceptical school. But Mrs. Ward and those whom she represents may say, as Professor Green said: We are conscious of the ultimate realities which we assert. "Ah," we reply, "if subjective consciousness is to be given a hearing, we also claim to be heard. We are as conscious of Christ as you are of God, of love, and of duty. But Squire Wendover and all his friends will tolerate neither your consciousness nor ours."

It is a remarkable fact, as Mr. Gladstone points out, that ever since the fourth century the Christian conception of Christ has been absolutely unchanged. Amid all our controversies and schisms we have never doubted or disputed the claims of Christ. To-day, if you were to shut up in a room the

Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Spurgeon, Cardinal Manning, General Booth, the Chairman of the Congregational Union, and the President of the Methodist Conference, and tell them that they must remain there until they were all agreed in a common definition of the claims of Christ, they would not be detained for five minutes. Differing on ten thousand points, they would all agree here. The case is even stronger than Mr. Gladstone's statement of it. Although there were serious differences of opinion until the days of Athanasius, as to the exact definition of our Lord's nature; no Christian during the first three centuries held that Christ was simply a man.

The doctrine of Professor Green and his disciples is absolutely new. Even the Socinians of a later period ascribed something more than mere manhood to Christ. No Christian Church has ever yet accepted the faith of Robert Elsmere. The attempt to retain the peculiar and distinctive ethical teaching of Christianity without the Christ is as hopeless as the attempt to retain the life of a lovely and fragrant flower after you have severed it from its root. You might as well hope to bask in the sunlight after you had abolished the sun. It is true that twice a day you have sunlight without a visible sun, at dawn and at sunset. But dawn and sunset are short-lived. They herald the appear-

ance and the disappearance of the sun. Many a Hindoo is in the dawn, some Englishmen are in the sunset of Christianity. But the dawn will brighten into day, and the sunset will pass into night. There is no lasting daylight except when the Sun of righteousness is above the horizon of consciousness.

Mr. Gladstone points out the astounding ease with which Elsmere rejects Christianity. His first perusal of Wendover's book shattered the fabric of his faith. He dismisses calmly and at once the testimony of nineteen centuries. How strikingly this resembles the readiness with which George Eliot made a similar sacrifice! She settled the whole question in a few short weeks, under the influence of a book so obscure that scarcely any one had ever heard of it until her biography appeared. Of course, no one who had ever understood Christianity, or whose opinion of Christianity had any real value, could possibly reject it in six weeks. George Eliot never considered the real evidence for Christianity. She rejected a figment of her own brain. Christianity itself, real Christianity, she never knew. The same statement must be made of Robert Elsmere. He appears before us as the great apostle of testimony; and he calmly ignores the testimony of the Christian consciousness!

This is my main point. Mrs. Humphry Ward evidently has never understood the essential characteristic of Christianity—that which differentiates it from every other religion in the world. Comparative religion, instead of injuring Christianity, as she imagines, has been of the greatest service. Our knowledge of the Asiatic religions has brought out the unique glory of Christianity as it has never been exhibited before. Sir Monier-Williams says that the characteristic and absolutely unparalleled feature of Christianity is the *living personal* relation of the individual Christian to Christ. But Robert Elsmere never had the faintest conception of that. He never so much as realized that this was the fundamental fact of Scriptural Christianity. When he put himself through a searching catechism, to discover how much of orthodox Christianity he still retained, he omitted this truth altogether from his catalogue. He believed that he had made an exhaustive statement of the orthodox view of Christ when he stated that it included a belief “in the Man-God, the Word from eternity, in a wonder-working Christ, in a risen and ascended Jesus, in the living Intercessor and Mediator for the lives of the doomed brethren.”

But this is like the play of Hamlet with Hamlet left out. He omits the essential doctrine without

which everything else would be a mockery. He says nothing, because he knows nothing, about the living and risen Saviour, *now in the heart* of the Christian, *now in living union* with the Christian, as the vine and branch are in union, and as the member and the head are in union. The conclusion of the whole matter is that Robert Elsmere never was a Christian in the Scriptural sense of the term. He had never entered into that personal relation with Christ which is the very essence of Scriptural Christianity. Mr. Gladstone does not give as much prominence as I have to this main point, but he does express it in the plainest terms in the following remarkable words: “Christianity, in the established Christian sense, is the presentation to us, not of abstract dogmas for acceptance, but of a living and a Divine Person, to whom we are to be *united by a vital incorporation*. It is the reunion to God of a nature severed from God by sin, and the process is one, not of teaching lessons, but of imparting a *new life*, with its ordained equipment of gifts and powers.” In these words Mr. Gladstone expresses the belief and experience of all properly-instructed Christians in every century of Christian history.

When the sceptics of the age of Augustine asked that great man what they would gain by becoming Christians, because they could be truthful, chaste,

and honest while they continued to be sceptics, Augustine answered that the very essence of true Christianity was a living union with Christ, from which union Christians derived a new life. Those who were here when I discussed the Christianity of General Gordon, as recently disclosed in his letters to his sister, will remember how emphatically the General insisted that this living union with Christ was the supreme necessity. Cardinal Newman, in his "Essay in aid of a Grammar of Assent," and the late F. D. Maurice, widely apart as they were, agreed in representing this living relation to Christ as the heart and root of religion. The effect of realizing this relation to Christ is written at large on the pages of history. In this century, for example, Dr. Chalmers was a scholar, a clergyman, a theologian, an orator, a man of science, a leader of men before he understood and experienced this crowning truth. But when he did understand it, he was revolutionized, and the revolution in his own heart revolutionized Scotland.

Precisely the same thing occurred to John Wesley in the last century. He was a devout and zealous clergyman of the Established Church, but when he was more than thirty years of age Christ was revealed in him as He had not been revealed before, and from that day he became

another man. His comparatively unfruitful ministry became the most successful in modern history. That new experience of his changed the face of England, and filled the whole world. I, too, in all humility, speaking on behalf of millions of men and women in all lands, testify that their hearts and my own have experienced the Divine change to which Augustine and Gordon, and Maurice and Newman, and Chalmers and Wesley were never tired of referring; and yet to this living testimony of the Christians of every age Robert Elsmere never once refers. This book attacks the out-works of Christianity; it never so much as discharges a single shell at the citadel.

It is not a question of documents. It is a question of living men and living women, who realize in their own souls the presence of the Divine Christ. Squire Wendover might argue for fifty years, but his arguments would never produce the slightest impression upon such Christians. Robert Elsmere abandoned Christianity at once because he had never understood it, never experienced it, never realized it as it is realized by all those whose Christianity is not a hope or a mental conviction, but a fact and a *life*. I will resume this discussion next Sunday, and shall be glad to answer any questions or objections that may reach me through the post.

VIII.

THE PROBLEM FOR UNBELIEF.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
May 20th, 1888.*

VIII.

THE PROBLEM FOR UNBELIEF.

“And we are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him.”—ACTS v. 32.

I AM very glad that several gentlemen have accepted the invitation to write to me about any objections or difficulties which my line of argument may have suggested to them. As we are not subject to any conventional restraints, and as the object of this Conference is entirely practical, I propose to deal at once with some of these letters. The first is from a gentleman who was formerly a tutor and Fellow of the famous Oxford College to which Robert Elsmere belonged. This gentleman writes: “I listened on Sunday with much interest to your address on Robert Elsmere. Will you allow me to draw attention to a point which you appeared to overlook, and which vitiates, as I think, your case against him? Assuming that, not indeed to Christians universally, yet to an important section of Protestant Christianity, the essence of the Christian religion lies—as was well-known to Catharine Elsmere—in a personal relation between Christ and the believer, the truth

and reality of that relation is dependent, as you doubtless hold, on His Divinity. Further, that Divinity is itself bound up with the truth of the Gospel miracles, in particular with that of the Resurrection. If the Resurrection did not happen, you and orthodox Christians generally would declare with one consent 'our faith is vain.' In other words, the *foundations* of the Christian faith are essentially *historical*, and to historical criticism they must be submitted. Well, it is the contention of Robert Elsmere that before that criticism the miraculous story crumbles away, and the orthodox Christian faith along with it. Now, the soundness of that contention (which, of course, may be disputed on other grounds) is in no way affected by the inadequacy (if so be) of Elsmere's apprehensions of what Christian faith is. For that faith in all its forms rests at last, by universal admission, on the truth of certain alleged events, and if these events did not occur, the ground is cut away from under it. Whether they (*e.g.*, the Resurrection) did occur or not is, as I have said, a question of fact which critical history alone is competent to answer. To form a right judgment on this or on any other historical question a saving Christian faith is not essential, and other qualities are; namely, historical knowledge and critical capacity. Strauss and Renan are in court here, and the

twenty-eight millions of half-educated mankind from China to Peru, to whom you appeal, are not."

Now, this is a very clear and able statement of the argument on the other side. Let us see how far we agree, and where the difference comes in. We agree that the personal relation to Christ—which I assert is the very essence of true Christianity—depends upon the Divinity of Christ. We agree that the Divinity of Christ depends upon the Resurrection of Christ, and that if He did not rise from the dead our faith is vain, we are yet in our sins. We agree that the question before us is a question of fact. Now we come to the point at issue. My correspondent assumes that the *only* evidence in favour of the Resurrection is to be found in certain ancient documents, and that the whole question must be settled by discussing the authenticity and genuineness of those documents. I am ready, when occasion arises, to discuss the documentary evidence. On that point I will stay now only to remind you that the testimony of the New Testament to the fact of the resurrection is not affected at all by the discussions about the Fourth Gospel, or by any theory of interpolation. No one denies to-day that the Epistles to the Romans, the Galatians, and the Corinthians were written by St. Paul. Those four epistles contain

indisputable proof that St. Paul and the early Christians believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. That is all we want the New Testament to prove on this subject. We have then to choose between the universal belief of men who risked and forfeited their lives for their belief, and the *à priori* assumptions of modern scepticism.

And that is not all. The historical evidence for the Resurrection includes the *personal testimony* of millions of Christians in every century of the Christian era, and of millions *now living*. Professor Huxley complains, in one of his delightful science primers, of those who try to study natural science without coming into living contact with Nature. I was once in that miserable predicament. I had to study chemistry without experiments. Now Robert Elsmere and my correspondent, and all whom they represent, are making a similar utterly unscientific mistake. They are discussing Christianity in their libraries and in books, far away from living Christians. They think it is a question of ancient documents. They argue and decide without coming into contact with living Christianity. They have no actual experience of what Christianity is doing at this very hour in the hearts of men. If they would go to Christians as different in many respects as General Booth and Father Ignatius, or Mr. Spurgeon and Mr.

Hay Aitken, or Canon Wilberforce and Mr. Moody, these experienced teachers would tell them of multitudes *now living* who had been saved by "the power of the resurrection." I myself have witnessed many thousands of indisputable and lasting moral conversions; and I may add that these sudden and complete conversions are, and always have been, peculiar to orthodox Christianity.

Are all these moral facts to be ignored? Are men to ascend in literary balloons, and far away in cloud-land to discuss and settle the great controversies of Christianity in the absence of the living witnesses of Christianity? I submit that we, who are in *conscious fellowship* with the risen Christ, are a part of the historical argument for the Resurrection. The documents cannot be understood in our absence, and yet these literary gentlemen try to rule us out of court altogether. Take, for instance, the testimony of my venerable friend, Mr. Calvert, the apostle of Fiji. He went to those islands half a century ago, and found degraded savages and cannibals. Within the lifetime of this one man, who is still among us, those savage cannibals have become in some respects even more civilized than we are. There has been an immense moral revolution. Science demands an adequate cause for such an effect. The converts all declare

with one voice that the cause is the power of the risen Christ. Neither is this moral power manifested only among men of inferior race. Take such a notorious case as that of the late Dr. Chalmers, one of the most gifted of a highly intellectual people. The conversion of Chalmers in the maturity of his powers changed the face of modern Scotland. Dr. Chalmers has a right to go into the witness-box before this case is closed. A great Œcumenical Missionary Conference is about to be held in London. Men are coming from all parts of the world to testify that within the last century Christianity has made more rapid progress, even numerically, than during the whole of its previous history.

Our good friends who are closeted in Oxford libraries have no idea of what is going on. They imagine that Christianity is losing its hold of mankind. As a matter of fact, it was never so powerful as it is to-day. All these living witnesses must be heard. They are, as St. Paul said, the *living epistles* (2 Cor. iii. 2, 3). It is utterly illogical and unscientific to ignore the "living epistle." Robert Elsmere imagined it was a question of documents, and interpolations, and ancient credulity. Therefore, having nothing to fall back upon, either in his own experience or in the experience of others, he yielded to the first assault of literary scepticism. A very able Unitarian newspaper, *The Inquirer*,

has an extended notice of my first Conference on this subject. I read *The Inquirer* every week, and am in hearty sympathy with much of its high-toned Christian teaching. But on this point we inevitably differ. *The Inquirer* concludes a kindly and courteous notice with the following words, which it evidently thinks will place me in a difficulty: "Mr. Hughes declares this to be a matter independent of documentary evidence. Does he mean that *if* it can be shown that the Gospels are wholly unreliable, and the Epistles spurious—we do not say they are—the doctrine of a Christ which is only taught on their authority could not be shaken?"

In that question *The Inquirer* assumes the point at issue. Of course the doctrine of a Christ "which is only taught on their authority" would be shaken. But my contention is that the doctrine in question is not taught "only on their authority." The books interpret and explain and illustrate the Christian life; but the life itself is independent of all documents, and existed before any of them were written. The New Testament is invaluable and essential in our controversy with Rome, and with all who accept Christianity, but have, as we hold, departed from its primitive simplicity. But on this fundamental question, on which all orthodox Christians are and always have been agreed,

we have other evidence in the depths of our own souls.

“What we have felt and seen,
With confidence we tell.”

Surely *The Inquirer* does not need to be informed that the living Church existed before the New Testament was written, and that none of the first Christians referred to documents, but that they all testified to facts of living personal experience?

Take the day on which the Church was born, the Day of Pentecost, which we commemorate this afternoon. Peter and the rest, arguing with Jews, quoted the Old Testament; but the ground of their argument was their personal experience of the power of the risen Christ to save men from sin. Listen to the text: “We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost”—the Holy Ghost speaking in the depths of men’s souls, and echoing there the truths fearlessly proclaimed by the first Christians. No man has ever accepted Christianity merely or mainly on documentary or literary evidence; and no man who has experienced the saving power of Christ could ever reject it on such grounds. Let me conclude with the memorable testimony of one of the most experienced and sensible men in England—Dr. Dale, of Birmingham. Dr. Dale is not a sentimental dreamer or an ignorant enthusiast. Listen to his words: “When a man is regenerated,

he receives a new life, and receives it from God. In itself regeneration is not a change in his old life, but the beginning of a new life, which is conferred by the immediate and supernatural act of the Holy Spirit. The man is really 'born again.' Yes! and the man whose Christianity is not a theory, or a speculation, or a creed, but a *realized life*, is not at the mercy of documentary evidence.

IX.

*CHRISTIANITY NOT A DOCTRINE OR AN
ETHICAL SYSTEM, BUT A NEW LIFE.*

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday evening,
December 2nd, 1888.*

XI.

CHRISTIANITY NOT A DOCTRINE OR AN ETHICAL SYSTEM, BUT A NEW LIFE.

“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew.”—ST. JOHN iii. 7.

WE cannot too frequently return to the fundamental fact of Christianity. Our Lord said, “Marvel not”; but men marvel still. Journalists, politicians, educationists, even many ministers of religion, are this very day as incredulous and amazed as Nicodemus.

Many intelligent men begin, like Nicodemus, with the delusion that Christianity is a system of truth, and that therefore to become a Christian means simply to *receive certain doctrines*. That was the first delusion of Nicodemus. He thought he had done all that could be desired when he had approached Christ and said: “Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God.” Undoubtedly, when he had said that, he had said something of enormous significance. It was a noble confession. It expressed a tremendous change of opinion. Here was one of the greatest of the recognised and authorized religious teachers of the age—“the teacher,” *par excellence*, “of Israel”

—accepting the Galilean Peasant as the promised Messiah of his race. In the teeth of all his prejudices and all his interests, when his own friends and associates hated and despised Christ, Nicodemus saluted Him as a prophet inspired of God, as One whose doctrines must be accepted as the doctrines of the Eternal Himself.

The more we reflect upon this confession from the lips of such a man as Nicodemus the more are we impressed with its far-reaching and revolutionary consequences. But mark the response of our Lord. He did not accept this splendid tribute as a generous and sufficient acknowledgment of His claims. Far from it. There is a certain coldness, there is a certain tone of lofty rebuke, in the solemn words: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The mere acknowledgment of Christ as a Divinely-appointed teacher, the mere acceptance of His teaching, is not Christianity. A man may utter the confession of Nicodemus from the bottom of his heart, and yet not so much as "see the kingdom of God." A change of opinion, as I have admitted, often involves tremendous consequences. But Christian conversion is not a change of opinion. It is a new life.

Mr. Frederic Harrison, in his article in *The Fortnightly*, to which I have already referred more

than once, talks about giving up Christianity. He never gave up Christianity. At this moment he evidently has no conception of what real Christians mean by real personal Christianity. He imagines that Christianity is a state of opinion in relation to certain difficult and mysterious questions, such as the origin of the universe, and the immortality of the soul. It is nothing of the kind. A man may accept what are regarded as orthodox opinions. He may afterwards abandon them, and become a Positivist, or an Agnostic. Well, he has changed his mind. That is all. He never was a Christian. Real Christianity is a vital fact, not an opinion. On the other hand, a man, as Wesley said in his downright way, may be as orthodox as the devil himself and as far from being a Christian. Correct views about Divine truth are of unspeakable importance, but they do not make a man a Christian. On the other hand, a man may have a great many erroneous opinions in his head, and yet be a real Christian. No man is a Christian until he is "born anew."

Again, *outward amendment of life* is not Christianity. This was the second delusion in the mind of Nicodemus. When the Master talked about being "born anew," Nicodemus exclaimed, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be

born?" (v. 4). "Surely," said Nicodemus, in effect, "you use the phrase, 'new birth,' in a figurative sense? You do not mean it in any conceivable literal sense?" To which Christ once more replied, with even unwonted emphasis and solemnity: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (v. 5). The real significance of these words has been hidden from millions of Christians by the extraordinary ecclesiastical delusion that they refer to Christian baptism. One of the very greatest difficulties in reading ancient documents is to avoid reading into them modern meanings. On the other hand, the greatest literary achievement is to realize the perspective of history, and by the assistance of an enlightened imagination to place ourselves at the standpoint of men who lived thousands of years ago.

There is one sentence in the dialogue which proves beyond all controversy that this sentence cannot possibly refer to Christian baptism. In the tenth verse our Lord rebukes Nicodemus for not understanding Him: "Art thou the teacher of Israel"—so called, to lift you above all your contemporaries—and yet "understandest not these things?" Now, if the words before us referred to Christian baptism, it would have been very unjust of our Lord to rebuke Nicodemus for not under-

standing what he could not possibly understand. Christian baptism had not been instituted at that time. How, then, could any enlightened Jew understand what had never been taught? We must find for every part of this conversation some meaning which a man in the position of Nicodemus ought to have known, and was to blame for not knowing. What could the phrases "born of water" and "born of the Spirit" signify in the ears of Nicodemus?

We have only to recall the familiar facts of that age to see at once what they mean. John the Baptist was the most conspicuous and popular religious teacher of the time. Everybody was talking about him. The two most impressive facts in his ministry were, first, that he baptized his disciples with water; and, secondly, that he declared One was coming after him whose shoe latchet he was unworthy to unloose, because his great Successor, the promised Messiah, was to baptize, not with water, but with the Holy Spirit (Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 6-8; Luke iii. 15, 16; John i. 19-34). There is no reason to doubt that Nicodemus, like most of his class, had become a disciple of John. He was, therefore, already baptized with water. He had received the baptism unto repentance. He had confessed his sins and outwardly amended his life. You remember the

blunt, practical advice John the Baptist gave different classes of persons. He advised the publicans to refrain from extortion, the soldiers to avoid violence, the multitude to minister to the needs of others (Luke iii. 10-14).

Nicodemus, like so many in our own day, thought that this outward amendment of life was all that was necessary. Our Lord taught him in the sentence we are now considering that it was necessary to be baptized with the Spirit as well as with water. The baptism of John is good as far as it goes, but it is not enough. We need the baptism of the Spirit also, the *new life* which Christ by His Spirit imparts. Take a modern illustration. The Temperance Reformation is of priceless value as we saw last Sunday, but it is not enough. When a drunkard signs the pledge, there is a marvellous change. His home is transformed, his wife and children are clothed, he recovers his position in society. But that is not enough; he is not yet a Christian. He must receive the baptism of the life-giving Spirit. He must be "born anew." As our Lord went on to argue, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Heredity will not help us here. We may have the most saintly of parents, but the Spirit of God alone can give us that Eternal Life which, and which alone, is true Christianity.

Our Lord admits that this truth is enveloped in mystery, but it is not altogether a mystery. It may be that as He spoke a gust of wind whistled through the narrow street of Jerusalem, and that He used the illustration before Him, as was His wont. In any case, the wind furnished Him with an exquisite illustration. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knoweth not whence it cometh and whither it goeth ; so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (v. 8). For example, you cannot tell the Whence and the Whither of the East wind. You cannot tell where it began to blow ; whether in the centre of Europe, or in Russia, or in Asia. Neither can you tell "whither it goeth" ; whether it will cease in mid-Atlantic, or travel right on to America. But you can tell two things about it—first, that it is blowing, and, secondly, that it is blowing in a particular direction. In like manner, you cannot tell the Whence and the Whither of the work of the Spirit in the heart of man. You cannot penetrate to the first beginnings of the embryonic Life which He creates as the very condition of the New Birth ; for only that which is already in some sense alive can be really "born." Neither can you tell what will be the ultimate evolution of that New Life, when we are "like Him, and see Him as He is." But you can tell when the New Life is present.

You can also tell the direction of its growth. It is from selfishness to Christ-likeness.

The decisive proof of the truth we have now reached is the *living, personal evidence* of those who have actually received and experienced this New Life. It is not a speculation or a theory, but an accomplished fact, a realized experience. "Verily, verily," says the Great Teacher once more in His most emphatic manner—"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and bear witness of that we have seen." (v. 11.) He places Himself at the head of all the living witnesses on behalf of Christianity, and speaks in the name of all. There is only one difference between Him and them. That Eternal Life which He and they have in common is His absolutely and theirs derivatively; His essentially, theirs only so long as they abide in Him, like branches in the living vine. Otherwise, their life and His are one. St. Paul is not using figurative language, he is expressing an actual psychological fact in the precise language of science, when he says, "I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me." This fact, it is already admitted, is in some respects as untraceable, as mysterious as the blowing of the wind. But it is presented to all men as a fact of personal experience.

The decisive evidence of Christianity is not the New Testament. Christianity existed before the

New Testament was written. The evidence we produce for your inspection is not something that happened two thousand years ago. It is what is now taking place under your very eyes. Our witnesses are *living men*. Let Dr. Dale, for example, step into the witness-box. Dr Dale is one of the sanest and shrewdest of men. He has had a large experience of men and things, and is the exact opposite of a sentimental fanatic. What does he say of regeneration, or the New Birth, which so much astonished Nicodemus? He says that

The simplest and most obvious account of regeneration, is the truest. When a man is regenerated he receives a new life, and receives it from God. In itself regeneration is not a change in his old life, but the beginning of a new life, which is conferred by the immediate and supernatural act of the Holy Spirit. The man is really "born again." A higher nature comes to him than that which he inherited from his human parents; "he is begotten of God," "born of the Spirit."

Yesterday I was reading an intensely interesting little book sent to me by my friend, Rev. Thomas Guttery. It was his admirable biographical sketch of William Clowes. You have probably never heard of William Clowes? You seldom do hear of the greatest benefactors of mankind until they have been buried for about a hundred years. William Clowes had a larger share than any other

man in creating, under God, the Primitive Methodist Church; that remarkable communion which already numbers more than 1,000 travelling preachers, more than 5,000 places of worship, nearly 200,000 Church members, and above 400,000 Sunday scholars. How did this dissolute and miserable man become an apostle of Christ? He went to a Methodist prayer-meeting. Let his own words describe what took place:—

The meeting was what some would term a noisy one, but I was not affected on that account; I felt I had enough to do for myself. The power of heaven came down upon me, and I cried for help to Him who is mighty to save. It was towards the close of the meeting when I felt my bands breaking; and when this change was taking place, I thought within myself, What is this? This, I said, is what the Methodists mean by being converted. Yes, this is it—God is converting my soul. In an agony of prayer I believed God would save me—then I believed He was saving me—then I believed He had saved me, and it was so. I did not praise God aloud at the moment of my deliverance; but I was fully persuaded that God had wrought the glorious work—that I was justified by faith, and had peace with God through Jesus Christ. Accordingly, when the meeting was concluded, some one asked me how I was going on. I instantly replied, “God has pardoned all my sins.” All the people then fell upon their knees and returned thanks to God for my deliverance. Thus sorrow, which had continued for a night, passed away, and joy came in the morning. This memorable occasion, on which I entered, as it were, on a new period of existence, and began to live a new life, occurred on the morning of January 20th, 1805.

Every true Christian has experienced a similar

“new life.” It may not have come so suddenly. He may not be able to state as precisely when and where he was “born anew.” But “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature. The old things are passed away; behold they are become new” (2 Cor. v. 17). I myself, also—blessed be God!—am a living witness of these things. I take my stand beside William Clowes, and Dr. Dale, and all the real Christians of every age and of every land. We differ on a thousand points of doctrine and Church government, but on this vital point we are agreed. This is the sum and substance of the good news from God—“that God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life” (1 John v. 11, 12). Mark the exact words of the great theologian. “He that hath the Son”—not he that believes the Son is a prophet of God, or he that accepts the ethical system of the Son—“he that hath the Son”—he that is in vital union with “the second Adam”—hath the life. Other men have bodily life and mental life; but that Divine life which manifests itself in the knowledge and love of the eternal Father is the exclusive possession of those who “have” and “abide in” the Son. That eternal life—in comparison with which all else is death—that eternal life is offered to you, and to all men.

as an absolutely free gift. The everlasting love of God implores you to receive it. If you are willing, it may be yours—here, now! While I am yet speaking, you may live in Christ.

X.

*NATIONAL CHARACTER DETERMINED
BY THE NATIONAL LAWS.*

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
December 18th, 1887.*

X.

*NATIONAL CHARACTER DETERMINED
BY THE NATIONAL LAWS.*

“Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgements, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go in to possess it. Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what great nation is there, that hath a god so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is whensoever we call upon Him? And what great nation is there that hath statutes and judgements so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?”—DEUT. iv. 5-8.

I N this passage Moses teaches us that the real condition of national greatness is to be found in the character of our laws. There are some foolish persons who think that the greatness of a nation depends upon the extent of territory over which its authority spreads; and we are sometimes in danger of boasting that the sun never sets upon the British Empire, and that the beat of the morning drum of the British Army never ceases to rattle round the world. I am not sure that this is so much to boast about, when I remember by what means we have acquired this world-empire. At any rate, I entirely repudiate the notion that the greatness of a

country is in any degree measured by the amount of territory over which its authority extends. The two greatest nations of antiquity, so far as their subsequent influence upon human affairs is concerned, were the Jews and the Greeks, and they both belonged to little countries like Wales. There is no greater delusion than to suppose that national greatness depends upon geography.

In the second place, there are some who, with better reasons, argue that national greatness depends upon high culture. To some extent it does, and we are therefore in the habit of giving Greece a great place in human history, on account of the culture of Greece. And yet, for the highest influence at this moment, even Greece herself must yield to the claims of Palestine. There is something better even than the lofty culture of Athens, and that is the Ten Commandments which I read to you as the lesson to-day. Then, again, there are others—too many, I fear; some even in this audience—who are in danger of supposing that the greatness of a country is determined by victory on battle-fields. I never felt more miserable, or more indignant, or more disgusted in my life than when I went to Versailles this year to see the great palace of the kings of France—dedicated, as they said, “to the glories of France.” I found that there were twenty miles of pictures. I did not walk all the twenty

miles, but I walked a good many of them, and I was wading through blood all the time. Blood! blood! blood! everywhere. I was horrified when I saw the youths and maidens of France walking through these crowded buildings, and every picture suggesting to them the accursed idea that the true glory of France was to be found in killing people. Not a single picture representing peace did I see. I do not deny that there may be circumstances in which a defensive war is justified; but to suggest that the great glory of any country is to be found on fields of blood is to indicate that you have sunk to the lowest depths of barbarism.

In the ever-memorable passage before us Moses claims that his people were great, not because they ever had vast territory, or high culture, or great military triumphs, but because they had laws in harmony with the will of God. Oh, that we may, by the help of Christ, cast out of our hearts the base greed of empire and the base greed of gold. The Scriptural test is the only rational test of the greatness of any country under heaven. It is this: What kind of laws have you in that country? The national character determines, and is determined by, the laws of a country; just as the national conduct is expressed in the policy of a country. All wise Christians desire national religion, desire that the nation, as well as the individual, should

be Christian; but how will you secure national religion? I suppose nobody in the present day believes that you can secure national religion by laying hold of some particular sect, or of all sects, and establishing them and endowing them with money. You have only to look at France at this moment. Would any one in his senses say that France was a Christian country, though, as a matter of fact, every religion in France is endowed by the State? But how is it that the men at the head of affairs, many of whom, for reasons into which I need not enter now, hate Christianity with a bitter hatred, are amongst the warmest supporters of the measures by which all the sects are endowed? Because they believe that is the way to lay their hands on the different sects, to keep them down, and to prevent them from exercising influence objectionable to the people in authority. France proves that you can never have national religion by that means. St. John says, "He that doeth righteousness is righteous," and the only Christian nation is the nation with a Christian statute-book, a Christian foreign policy, and a Christian home policy. Neither this nor any other country has ever been a really Christian country. There have been moments when we have risen to the level of Christ's teaching, and no doubt public life is being more and more leavened by the leaven of Christ;

but let us never admit that this is yet a Christian country.

The world has yet to see what a Christian country is. We have scarcely attained even to the Jewish level. I have read to-day the Ten Commandments, given to the Jews at the time when they were lower in the moral scale than we are. But our policy as a nation has never attained even to the Ten Commandments. We have been guilty of stealing the property of other nations, of murdering innocent men in unnecessary wars, and even of enforcing Acts by which we made provision for the lusts of the flesh. Oh! how fearfully possible it is for the nation, as well as the individual, to draw near to God with the lips while the heart is far from Him. The real character of every nation is determined by the character of its laws. In that scale we must weigh all.

But before we apply that test to the statute-book of our own country, let us examine a delusion which lies on the very threshold. How constantly we hear it said that "you cannot make men moral by Act of Parliament." I never heard anybody say that, except when he was trying in some way to hinder the kingdom of God. When men try to prevent the advance of the temperance movement and other great moral enterprises, they are very fond of rattling off that sentence. It is

supposed to be a reply to moral fanatics; that is to say, to sober and wise patriots. When men glibly tell us that we cannot make people moral by Act of Parliament, I should like to know what they mean. They probably do not know themselves. Do they mean that force in itself is no remedy? If so, let them live up to their convictions. But let us not forget that a law is a good deal more than force. An Act of Parliament is not mere force. It is educational. It teaches the conscience, it strengthens the conscience, and even the most degraded usually realize that what is illegal is wrong.

At any rate, whether you can make men moral by Act of Parliament or not, it is quite certain that you can make them immoral. Behold the liquor traffic as it now exists, created and stimulated by many Acts of Parliament—the supreme curse of our country! Think of the Contagious Diseases Acts, which for so many years dragged some of our military centres to the very verge of hell. And, on the other hand, as proving that men may in another sense be made moral by Act of Parliament or by Law, look at the Jews, who when the Law of Moses was given to them were, in many respects, amongst the most degraded people in the world, but they gradually rose through the influence of this Law to what was comparatively, in ancient

times, a high condition of morality. After all, what is law but public opinion made definite and enforced?

The statute-book, be it ever remembered, is the national conscience, just as the executive Government is the national will; and how extremely important it is to purify the national conscience! If any further evidence is needed that the favourite expression that "you cannot make men moral by Act of Parliament" is a falsehood, I need only refer you to that ever-memorable monument of the beneficent life of the late Lord Shaftesbury—the Factory Acts. The Factory Acts! Why, they have created a moral revolution in the "Black Country." In many parts of England women and children were degraded beyond expression; and because the national conscience embodied these protective Acts in the statute-book of this country, the whole moral condition of vast masses of the people has been entirely changed. Let us, then, for ever dismiss from our minds the delusion that you cannot make people moral by Act of Parliament. The morality of this nation, as a whole, is immeasurably influenced by the character of the Acts of Parliament.

There is another common delusion I should like to name. You often find the opponents of progressive and moral legislation saying that "you

must not legislate in advance of public opinion." Now, whenever that plausible and dangerous sentiment is used for the purpose of diluting your enthusiasm and discouraging your zeal for human happiness, be careful to cross-examine the man who utters it. Ask him what he means by public opinion. Does he mean the public opinion of the House of Commons? If so, tell him it is our great privilege to pass Acts of Parliament very much in advance of the opinion of the House of Commons. Does he mean the opinion of Society, or of the West-End clubs, or of the editors of the London journals? If so, we can only say, as a matter of fact, that all these exponents of public opinion have resisted some of the most beneficent Acts of our time, but they have been defeated by the power of Jesus Christ. You cannot pass Acts in advance of public opinion! Let me give you a striking proof that we have done so.

Some years ago laws were passed for the purpose of putting down prize-fighting. I myself remember Lord Palmerston, in the height of his power as the representative of a kind of jovial English Jingoism, getting up in the House of Commons, defending prize-fighting, and declaring deliberately that it developed the manly qualities of the English race; but we passed an Act of Parliament which put down prize-fighting in spite

of Lord Palmerston. A man has lately come to this country from America. If he were merely a boxer, I should not have anything to say about him. Boxing is a very different thing from prize-fighting. My friend, Mr. Reaney, when he was here last Sunday, spoke favourably of boxing. I am not speaking now against the use of your fists, for example, in the defence of outraged womanhood or childhood. But prize-fighting! base and brutal beyond all expression. For the mere purpose of making money, a man degrades himself below the level of the beasts of the field. And yet that prize-fighter appeared in this very Hall a few weeks ago, and persons of high rank gave him an enthusiastic welcome. Still the law of this country is so entirely opposed to such brutality, that this prize-fighter and all his "backers" are obliged to sneak out of England in order to fight. You cannot have more startling evidence than this of the fact that law may be very much in advance of what is generally supposed to be public opinion.

I have sitting near me now Mr. Benjamin Waugh, who is a living illustration of the fact that public opinion is in advance of the opinion of both Houses of Parliament. Last year Mr. Waugh secured a revolutionary change in the law of England—a change which was opposed by the

great leaders of both political parties. Only twelve months ago it was impossible in criminal cases to take the evidence of any witness who was not old enough to understand the nature of an oath. The result was that if some human devil outraged a child too young to understand the nature of an oath, he escaped scot-free. This man (Mr. Waugh), moved by the Spirit of God, said that was outrageous. The great leaders of both political parties said it was impossible to alter the law, but this extreme man thought nothing was impossible that was right. He proceeded to both Houses of Parliament and button-holed the members. Aided by the influence of Mr. W. T. Stead, such was the force of the public opinion, not of the supposed leaders of public opinion, but of the new electorate, of the masses of the people, that in one week Mr. Benjamin Waugh effected that glorious change in the law of England, whereby the evidence of witnesses not old enough to understand the nature of an oath is now taken in cases of outrage upon the young. Since this law was passed I believe that fifty of those scoundrels, who criminally assault children of tender years, have been put in prison for long terms of penal servitude. And there are many other similar changes in the law of this country which may yet be enforced when a few more men have faith in God,

and when their hearts are full of sympathy for the poor, the weak, and the suffering.

The one deadly charge I have to bring against the law of England to-day is this, that crimes against the *person* are regarded as almost trivial in comparison with crimes against *property*. The Northern farmer in Tennyson's well-known poem heard his horse, as it trotted along, always saying, "Property, property, property!" and you find the same sound running through the English law from beginning to end. There is the greatest possible care for property, to which we do not object, for God says, "Thou shalt not steal"; but there is the most terrible neglect of that which is of immeasurably greater importance—the sacred personal rights of every man, woman and child, whether rich or poor. Let me just contrast for a few minutes one or two cases. The extracts I read are taken from the third edition of a book called "Social Wreckage," written by Mr. Peek, and published by Isbister. Let everybody who loves God get this book, and compare the difference in English law between offences against the person and offences against property. A man, named O'Neil, was charged in one of our London courts with kicking his step-daughter—his treatment of her resulting in the partial paralysis of one leg—was sentenced to four months' imprison-

ment. On the other hand, Eliza Ralph, who pleaded guilty at the Middlesex Sessions to stealing a sheet and some other articles, was sentenced, not to four months' imprisonment, but to seven years' penal servitude. That is the difference between the value of a little girl of fifteen and the value of a sheet. A woman, named Harley, was sentenced at Woolwich, to imprisonment for one month, for abusing a child a few months old; while at Clerkenwell a child of ten, who stole a lock valued at 4*d.*, had twenty-one days' hard labour. Again, a man was charged with throwing his wife down a flight of twenty-four stairs, and was fined 20*s.*, or ten days' hard labour; while a decent-looking woman, described as a seamstress, who stole some cotton, was sentenced to six months' hard labour, without the option of a fine.

Two men, who were charged with killing a person from whom they had received no provocation, were sentenced to twelve months' hard labour. At the Surrey Sessions, a man who killed nobody, but received half a crown, knowing it to be stolen, was sentenced, not to twelve months', but to fourteen years' penal servitude. So it appears that according to English law it is fourteen times as dreadful to receive a stolen half-crown as to kill a man who has not provoked you. Just one other illustration. Richard Manning was convicted at

Southwark of cruelly ill-treating his wife immediately after she had been delivered of a child. She, at the peril of her life, crawled along the floor of her room and got on to the stairs to escape from him. This man was sentenced to four months' hard labour. About the same time a man was brought before another court, charged with stealing five silver spoons. The man, Manning, who, under such dreadful circumstances, nearly killed his wife, was sentenced to four months' hard labour: the man who stole the five silver spoons was sent to penal servitude for seven years!

Now the inevitable result of this diabolical inequality in the law is to produce the kind of savagery which is encouraged by the men who call a prize-fighter a fine fellow. "The rank is but the guinea stamp." We must defend men, women, and children at all hazards. When I think of the law of England, so severe on those who steal and so lenient to those guilty of the most awful atrocities even to their own wives and children, I remember that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was a man who had no property at all. "He had not where to lay His head"; by which fact He would teach us that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth."

The teaching of the New Testament is that man *as man* is immeasurably greater than rank or

wealth can ever make him. We have a great responsibility in this matter. We must see that such changes are effected in our English law as will extend to human beings the same protection that is now given to their property. I am again, in closing, reminded of my friend Mr. Waugh. If the law bears hardly against men, it bears more hardly against women, and most hardly of all against children. The law-makers of this country seem to have made very light of the most deadly outrages against women and children. A Society has now been formed, of which my friend Mr. Waugh is secretary, for the prevention of cruelty to children. By caring for the children we are going to the very root of the mischief. If we wish our country to be truly great, there is no better way in which we can secure its greatness than by seeing that the Law of England, in the better days that are coming, shall give the same absolute protection to the poorest child in the land that it gives to the Queen herself.

XI.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
January 7th, 1888.*

XI.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

“And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning : afterward thou shalt be called The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed with judgement, and her converts with righteousness.”—ISAIAH i. 26, 27.

HERE Isaiah promises to the people of Israel, as a crowning blessing of their national life, the appointment of just and righteous judges. Speaking of the administration of justice, from the Christian point of view, two or three Sundays ago, I brought under your notice a fearful defect which runs all through the statute law of England. It was this : that the Law of England still attaches much more terrible penalties to crimes against the rights of property than to crimes against personal rights ; and, consequently, so far as the English Law instructs the people—and it is almost the only religious instructor the masses of the people have—it is a much more dreadful thing for a man to steal a few loaves of bread, when starving, than to dance on the head of his wife and nearly kill her. I brought before you many instances where theft of a comparatively trivial character was pun-

ished by a long term of penal servitude, whereas the most horrible outrages against women and children were followed only by a few months' imprisonment. I insisted that it was one of the highest duties of Christian citizens to secure that the sacred rights of every human being, however poor—or, I would add, however wicked—should be as sacredly guarded by the Law of England as the rights of property.

I do not want in the slightest degree to weaken the sanction which has been given by the rulers of the past to the law, "Thou shalt not steal;" but I confess that I do desire that the Law of England should give equal sanction to the law, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." There was a barrister in the audience on that occasion, who wrote a letter to Mr. Percy Bunting, which he was good enough to show me. This gentleman, while not disputing the general truth of my criticism with respect to the one-sided character of the English Law, thought I ought to have mentioned the fact that the length of these relative sentences was determined, not only by the Statute Law itself, but by the discretion of the judges; and that if the judges of England had the same high sense of the sacred rights of the individual as Christ had, it would be well within their power to make the administration of justice, even now, very much

more equal than it is. I fully admit the correctness of that criticism : but the limit of time compelled me to confine myself on that occasion to the Law itself ; reserving a discussion of the administration of justice for this Conference.

There can be no doubt that the Law, in its one-sidedness, reflects the current opinion of the ruling classes of the past. They were very sensitive with respect to the rights of property ; but I am bound to say they were not equally sensitive with respect to personal rights. I believe the new electorate of this country will be equally sensitive on that point ; and without in any way interfering with the rights of property, or with the sanction that prohibits theft, the day is at hand when the Law of England will exhibit a much greater regard for the personal rights of every man, every woman, and every child. It is not unnatural that the prevalent neglect of personal rights should be, to some extent, exhibited in the sentences, as well as in the letter, of the law. Nearly everything I have to say this afternoon is taken from a book entitled "Social Wreckage," which I wish everybody would read. It is written by Mr. Peck, a well-known member of the London School Board, and a prominent philanthropist. I was very glad to see that my gifted friend, Dr. Clifford, in publishing a list of books upon social Christianity,

which all enlightened Christians ought to read, mentions Mr. Peek's book first. I would strongly urge everybody to read the books Dr. Clifford names in his list. Mr. Peek in this book commits himself deliberately to the opinion that the miscarriage of justice is on the increase in this country—a very startling thing for a man to say in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Peek uses words which I should not venture to use myself, but which, uttered by one so capable of giving an opinion, I do not hesitate to quote. He says: "It seems as if the sentences passed frequently depended upon the temper and health of the judge at the time," by which I presume he means that some of our judges sometimes give very much severer sentences than on other occasions. To some limited extent that is inevitable. The judges are human beings. It is obvious that we must give the judges some discretion. You cannot alter the law to the extent of determining the precise length of the sentence that ought to follow the verdict of a jury. At the same time, it is well that the discretion of judges should be restrained within very severe limits. Further, and yet more importantly, it is very desirable that the administration even of judges should be subject to the constant influence of enlightened Christian opinion. There has been a great deal of irrational

superstition about judges, as there was in the Middle Ages about the clergy. At one time no one was allowed to criticise ministers of religion. That is no longer the case. We are now criticised very freely indeed. But I do not think much harm is done by that criticism. I do not suggest that judges should be criticised quite as freely; because, after all, it is of the gravest importance to maintain the dignity and the authority of those who represent the justice of the country. I have as keen a sense of that as any man has. A judge not only represents the Queen, but, so far as he is a minister of Justice, he represents God Himself. We ought, therefore, to clothe his office with the utmost sacredness. I hold that the office of judge is as sacred as my own. How extremely important it is that all judges should realize that themselves; and should be scrupulously careful never to do anything that comes into collision with the Christian conscience!

We cannot prevent men from criticising the action of judges. Therefore, it is best that they should be judged by Christian men. This is an age of free discussion and criticism of everybody, high and low. It is, consequently, more necessary than ever that such evils as those to which Mr. Peek refers should be respectfully and carefully pointed out. It is useless for us to shut our eyes to the fact that

the way in which judges are appointed in this country is not one that always secures the high end which Christian citizens have in view. It is a notorious fact that the appointment to this great and prized office is generally the reward of political service. Now, I have no insuperable objection to a man who has rendered service to his political party, being appointed a judge. At the same time, every one must feel that there is a great weakness in that arrangement; and that it would be an immense national advantage if we could separate the appointment of judges altogether from every consideration of party politics; and if judges could be lifted entirely above the atmosphere of political strife. If there is this inevitable weakness at the very point at which a man is elected to the bench, it is the more important that the whole of his subsequent career should be entirely free from political taint.

Mr. Peck, in his book, goes on to deal with those questions which must be considered if justice is to be maintained; and if those who administer justice are to secure the respect of the masses of the people. You and I, from religious conviction, would always respect those who administer justice; and therefore, if there are obvious defects in the administration of justice, we, as the best friends of justice, are bound to point them out. Mr. Peck

says that of late years there has been a great increase in the *bullying of witnesses*; that barristers pleading in our courts have assumed a licence in cross-examination which was never permitted before; and that this is partly due to the fact that judges have entirely abandoned the habit of restraining the licence of cross-examining counsel; and not only so, but they have entirely abandoned the habit which once existed of committing witnesses for perjury, where it was evident a man was lying. As judges have withdrawn their restraint, Mr. Peek believes that barristers have been led to be more relentless in trying to extort the truth by the fiercest sort of examination. I myself have known truthful and honest persons with nothing to conceal; who, however, being nervous, have shrunk exceedingly from going into a court of justice to give evidence, on account of the furious and relentless cross-examination to which they would be subjected.

There is another great evil which Mr. Peek mentions, namely, that the State throws the burden of setting the law in operation upon private citizens, however poor they are, and however unable to vindicate their sacred rights. It is true that we have a public prosecutor; but it is already evident that the creation of this office has not accomplished the object it intended. We are told that it would

cost millions a year to vindicate the rights of all. But surely it would be much better to spend our money in this way than in shameful wars. Let there be as much readiness in spending money to secure justice for all, as in promoting war. In the absence of a *proper public prosecutor* the gravest offenders sometimes go "scot-free," because those whom they have wronged are too poor to bring them to justice.

With respect to civil cases, what is sometimes called "the glorious uncertainty of the law," is a very great scandal and disgrace to this country. The immense *cost of obtaining justice in civil cases* is another gigantic evil—a cost so enormous that many persons are obliged to submit to arbitration; and, too often, the poorer persons concerned in these cases never have justice at all. At the root of this evil lies the long delay that takes place in the administration of justice. It is a notorious fact that in London a great many cases are settled in the most unsatisfactory way, simply because suitors cannot wait until their cases come on. I suppose that at the bottom of this evil lies *the Long Vacation*. I am at a loss to understand why there should be a Long Vacation. If the doctors of London were to have a Long Vacation, if for five months there was not a single medical man in the metropolis, what would happen? Our doctors, I

am sure, work harder than our judges. I presume that the only reason for the Long Vacation is that the judges should have a rest. That is a mere question of appointing more judges, while the weary ones are enjoying their repose. All Governments are ready to spend millions in war: it is of the greatest importance that they should be compelled to spend millions in the greater victories of peace. A few distinguished men at the head of the Bar would be unable to take all the best briefs if cases went on all the year round; but I do not think this is a good reason for refusing justice to the masses of the people. There are plenty of other barristers ready and able to take these briefs. It is a national disgrace that there should be such a fearful delay in the administration of justice.

Then, again, the *excessive secrecy* which now envelops the administration of our prisons is a point that deserves the attention of intelligent Christian men. You are aware there was a great revolution in the administration of the prisons of this country when they were taken out of the hands of the local justices, and placed under the control of the imperial Government. All centralisation is very dangerous, and it should be understood that the magisterial oversight that remains is merely nominal. Attention was called in *The Times* newspaper a few weeks ago to the great necessity for the voluntary

visitation of female prisoners by judicious ladies in each locality where a prison is situated. There is the greatest difficulty in gaining admission to our convict prisons. If Elizabeth Fry herself rose from the dead to-day, and wanted to minister to her sisters in prison, the door would be slammed in her face. Jesus Christ said: "I was in prison and ye visited Me not." Those to whom He said that had no excuse to make; but if it was addressed to us, we should be able to say, "The authorities would not allow us."

The mere official administrations of the prison chaplain are not always sufficient. Sometimes the prison chaplain is all you could desire; but, in any case, female prisoners ought to be visited by Christian women. I can conceive no nobler office for a woman than that. The evils which I have now named, evils which go to the very heart and root of social wrong, are grossly neglected by party politicians. So you and I, who are not party politicians, must create such a public opinion as will compel these party politicians to do their duty. If every Christian minister took up themes of this kind, we should soon secure the true well-being of the English people. Another point on which everybody is agreed is that the *vicious classification of prisoners* in convict establishments is doing the greatest mischief. Mr. Peek tells us that the

minimum term of penal servitude is five years, and that this is reduceable in cases of good conduct by nine months. But after the first nine months of solitary confinement, all men committed for penal servitude are mixed indiscriminately with the most degraded jail-birds. The result is that the three or four years they spend in a convict establishment often become a school in which they are taught evils of which they had no conception before. It is simply shocking that those who go to prison for the first time should be exposed to influences of this sort.

There is only one other point to which I must refer to-day, and that is the way in which *laws relating to women* are administered. We owe very much to Mr. W. T. Stead and Mr. Benjamin Waugh for the glorious achievements of last year. To show the animus which influences some of those who administer the law, it is only necessary to mention the notorious fact that at least one judge has actually gone out of his way to criticise and condemn those blessed legislative improvements. Lord Chief Justice Coleridge—thank God, we have a Christian man at the very head of our judicial bench!—took the opportunity of publicly rebuking those who dared, on the seat of justice, to criticise the laws which they were appointed to administer. It is a pretty state of

things when the Lord Chief Justice has to teach his brother judges that they are not our masters, but our servants—our honoured and distinguished servants, to whom we pay all respect; but still our public servants, who are put on the bench not for the purpose of criticising the law demanded by the Christian conscience of England, by the Queen and by Parliament, but to carry it out with the utmost vigour and impartiality.

We should regard with the greatest concern the *constant and dangerous encroachments* of the English judges. The way in which cases are withdrawn from the juries, the way in which judges dictate to the jury what the nature of their verdict shall be, are things that Christian men ought to consider. I have studied verdicts and judgments for years, and my blood has often boiled within me when I have noticed the fearful leniency with which crimes against women are treated, and the yet more fearful severity with which the crimes of poor women are punished. There was a case the other day of a poor starving girl who left her child behind her, in the hope that some one would take it, and thus save them both, perhaps, from death. For this offence she was sent to penal servitude for five years. On the other hand, I read to you two or three Sundays ago the cases of men who, for nearly murdering their wives, received only three

or four months' imprisonment. I realize more and more that it is as absolutely necessary that we should have pure judges on the seat of justice as it is that we should have pure Members of Parliament. I am not bringing any charge against the judges as a class. But it is a notorious fact that there have been some judges, as there have been some Members of Parliament, who were not pure men. A judge died a few years ago in a house of infamy. A lady from a provincial city told me last week that she had occasion to go into a house of illfame in order to save a girl; and she saw there one of the most prominent magistrates of that city.

Now, whether a man is a judge of assize or the magistrate of a police court, he ought to be personally pure. If he is not pure, he is absolutely incapable of administering justice. For my part, I am very glad that some women are studying the law. I believe there are one or two ladies practising as chamber barristers in this city; and, eccentric as I may be regarded, I believe the time will come when we shall have, at least, a few women sitting on the seat of justice. I cannot trust a judge and jury—all of them men, and all of them corrupted by ages of false sentiment—to be judges of Social Purity in relation to women and girls. I hope the time will come when women will be appointed as

the administrators of justice to women and little girls.

Once more, the notorious Langworthy case has proved that there are some cases where even judges with the utmost desire to do justice are unable to succeed until they are supported by an enlightened Christian opinion. I know, therefore, no duty that is more noble or more urgent than that of endeavouring, by the help of God, to create such a state of enlightened Christian opinion that we may always have pure judges and Divine Justice on the judgment seat of British Law.

XII.

*OUR DUTY IN RELATION TO THE
LICENSING CLAUSES OF THE LOCAL
GOVERNMENT BILL.*

*Preached in St. James's Hall Sunday Afternoon,
April 8th, 1888.*

XII.

OUR DUTY IN RELATION TO THE LICENSING CLAUSES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL.¹

“The righteous taketh knowledge of the cause of the poor: the wicked hath not understanding to know it.”—PROV. xxix. 7.

THIS noble sentence gives us an unexpected but unerring test of Scriptural goodness. If a man contemplates public questions with a due and tender regard to the rights and interests of the poor, he is “righteous.” If, on the other hand, he ignores, or lightly regards “the cause of the poor,” he is, in the judgment of the Book of God, “wicked.” It is from the point of view of the poor that Christian citizens must contemplate the proposals of the ministry in relation to the liquor trade. If there is one subject more than another upon which the followers of Jesus Christ are bound to speak out, it is the liquor trade. It is

¹ A great outburst of Public Opinion compelled the withdrawal of the compensation clauses. But as a similar proposal may be revived at any time, the argument of this sermon is still needed.

the greatest of all existing hindrances to the progress of the Gospel in England. I do not question the good intentions of ministers, but the more I contemplate the licensing clauses of the Local Government Bill, the more am I alarmed and distressed.

There is one feature of the proposals now before the country to which very little public attention has been directed, but which may hereafter prove most disastrous. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has made the licence revenue the sheet-anchor of county finance. He transfers to the County Council the publicans' and grocers' licences, amounting to £1,378,143 a year; the spirit-dealers' licences, amounting to £83,800 a year; and the wine-dealers' licences, amounting to £43,000. Henceforth it will be the direct, palpable, and urgent interest of every ratepayer to prevent the suppression of any one of these licences. Each suppressed licence means so much loss to the local revenue, and so much addition to his own rate. When it is remembered how hard it has proved even to get a halfpenny rate for a Public Library, we can form some idea of the immense addition to the difficulties of Temperance Reform created by a step which heavily bribes every ratepayer to keep up the licences. But in the present political circumstances of the country it will probably be

impossible to prevent this part of the scheme from becoming law.

There is a gleam of light amid the darkness in the fact that the Bill distinctly recognises the principle of local option. The control of the licences is transferred from the non-representative magistrates to the County Council. Many are throwing up their caps over that, but I fear a careful study of this elaborate scheme will blight their hopes. In the first place, the new licensing authority is not elected *ad hoc*, and the issue will be complicated and confused by fifty other questions. In the next place, the licensing divisions are made so large that they include six electoral districts : that is to say, the representative of any particular district cannot carry out the wishes of his constituents unless he can command the votes of a majority of the representatives of five adjacent districts who have no interest whatever in agreeing with him ; who, on the contrary, are gratuitously risking their own seats by doing so. In the third place, the representative character of the licensing committee is further diluted by an infusion of non-representative and irresponsible aldermen, to the extent of one-third of the committee. In the fourth place, even if this strangely constituted licensing board hears the bitter cry of one of the six districts it partially represents, there is an

appeal from its decision to the County Council, in which each particular district has an absolutely insignificant numerical representation. As if all this did not sufficiently safeguard the interests of the publicans, assurance is made doubly sure by a novel and unprecedented proposal to compensate the holder of every licence which is not renewed. Let any sensible person weigh the first four features of the scheme which I have now enumerated, and he will realize that it would have been difficult to invent a more clever method of taking away with the left hand what is given by the right. But, probably, in relation to these features of the Bill, as in relation to that which I have already discussed, we are powerless. We must accept the homœopathic dose of local option which is given to us; and trust that God will hereafter enable us to secure that the voice of the people directly concerned shall be heard, and shall prevail.

When we come to consider the other principal proposal of the licensing clauses—the proposal to compensate the holders of unrenewed licences, we must fairly and promptly face the issue. Now, I am most anxious to do full justice to the publican, and more than justice, so far as that is possible without injustice to others. Let us treat the liquor-sellers as generously as possible. Are they entitled, either legally or morally, to any financial

compensation? That is essentially an ethical question, and one on which the Christian pulpit should speak frankly.

Let me explain one point. No one proposes to suppress any existing licence until the term for which it was granted expires. The question, therefore, is whether the holder of any liquor licence has a legal or equitable claim to its renewal when it has run out. On the *legal* side of this question, eminent judges have in recent years given decisions of the most unambiguous character. Mr. Justice Stephen, in 1882, said: "The legislature says, when we talk of a renewal of a licence we do not mean that, but we mean a new licence granted to a man who had one before." Again, Lord Chief Justice Cockburn said, in 1878: "According to the Act of 1828, the justices had the same discretion to refuse a renewal as they had to refuse a grant of a new licence." Mr. Justice Field said, in 1882: "In every case in every year there is a new licence granted. You may call it renewal, if you like; but that does not make the licence an old one. The Legislature does not call it a renewal. The Legislature is not capable of calling a new thing an old one. The Legislature recognises no vested right at all in any holder of a licence. It does not treat the interest as a vested one in any way." Once more, Mr. Baron Pollock said, in 1884: "The

notion that there is a property of the landlord in a licence cannot be considered as sound law." Here, then, we have the emphatic legal decisions of the most eminent judges. The matter does not admit of debate. Both Lord Cross and Sir William Harcourt, when holding the office of Home Secretary, echoed the statements of the judges. Even the late Mr. Thomas Nash, counsel to the Licensed Victuallers' Association, frankly and fully admitted, in a public letter to *The Morning Advertiser*, in 1883, that "there cannot be the smallest doubt that, in the strict sense, no such thing as a vested interest exists."

This indisputable statement is confirmed by the entire course of recent legislation. Take for instance, the Sunday Closing Acts. In 1853 Parliament closed all the public-houses in Scotland on Sunday. That at once reduced the annual consumption of spirits to the extent of 1,250,000 gallons. Subsequent legislation has enforced Sunday closing in Ireland and Wales. Parliament has, therefore, deprived the licence-holder of one-seventh of his time, and a good deal more than one-seventh of his profit, without the slightest compensation. Again, in 1869, Sir H. Selwyn-Ibbetson passed a Bill which raised the rental qualification of beer-houses. That closed upwards of 300 beer-houses in Liverpool alone. No one

dreamed of compensating them. Again, Meldon's Act of 1877 raised the rateable qualification of Irish beer-houses. That suppressed 557 licences in Dublin alone, and, of course, there was no compensation. In 1878 "The Canada Temperance Act" passed the Canadian Parliament. That Act enabled a majority of electors in any locality in that vast Dominion to suppress all the licences without a penny of compensation. The friends of the liquor trade appealed to Her Majesty's Privy Council, on the ground that such suppression without compensation was unconstitutional. Their appeal was rejected, and under that stringent law thousands of licences have already been suppressed in Canada.

At least 1,000 licences are suppressed in this country every year by the action of humane land-owners and other friends of the people. If the compensation clauses are passed, this steady and blessed process will for the future cost the rate-payers at least one million sterling annually! And if there is to be anything like a wholesale suppression of licences, the amount of compensation will be almost incalculable. The late Mr. Edwards, the General Secretary of the Licensed Victuallers' National Defence League, estimated that the compensation to which the trade would be entitled would amount to at least £400,000,000. Talk

about hereditary pensions, why, all of them put together would be a flea-bite in comparison with this unparalleled proposal. After straining out that gnat, are you going to swallow this camel?

What conceivable claim to compensation has a publican in *equity*? His licence is a most valuable monopoly, which thousands would like to share, but it is refused to them. I know a man who, when he got his licence for a mere song, said: "This licence has put £1,200 in my pocket." After giving him that sum, will you "compensate" him by giving him another out of the pockets of the struggling ratepayers? That these men have no claim to compensation may further be shown by the fact that it would be perfectly lawful for the Legislature, if it thought fit, to enact Free Trade in liquor, to let everybody sell it. What becomes of your compensation then? To compensate the holder of a lucrative monopoly is unheard of. But it may be said: "It is very hard to deprive a man of his living after he has invested all his capital in the business. Will you starve his wife and children?" Well, in the first place, the publican, like anybody else, must run trade risks and take the consequences of speculation. Many men put their money in uncertain enterprises, and lose it. It can scarcely be said that the publican has had no warning. For forty years an ever-growing party

has declared war against the liquor trade. The licence-holder can read on his licence that it is granted "for one whole year and no longer." Why should the publican alone, of all men, be protected against risks to which all tradesmen are exposed, and which he has chosen to ignore in the teeth of the decisions of judges, the statements of Home Secretaries, the pamphlets of Temperance reformers, the confessions of his own trade journals, and the very terms of his own licence? Further, as a matter of fact, there are very few cases of this kind. The great majority of licensed houses are "tied" houses. They belong to enormously wealthy brewers, who have already made fortunes, as Dr. Johnson said, "beyond the dreams of avarice," out of the folly and misery of mankind. They put into these houses of theirs poor wretches whom, unless they succeed in selling a certain quantity of their liquor, they evict without mercy. What claim have the brewers and distillers to compensation? They have already gained incalculable wealth out of their unhappy fellow-countrymen. Let them be satisfied.

A friend of mine wrote to me last week, urging the Temperance party to accept the compensation clauses on the ground that "most of the money" will come out of the pockets of the licence-holders. There never was a greater mistake.

The utmost that the new licence duty could give in any one year is £300,000 ; but the lowest calculations put the compensation at £180,000,000. If my friend's statement were correct, we should not object to the millionaires in the liquor trade compensating their less prosperous fellow-tradesmen. Indeed, Mr. James, an able member of the executive of the Licensed Victuallers' National Defence Association, has suggested that half the licensed houses should be closed ; and that the owners of those houses should be compensated by the other half, out of the increased profits which their greater monopoly would give them. He estimates the compensation at £70,000,000. Now, there can be no objection whatever to so reasonable and equitable a proposal. Let Bass, Allsopp, Guinness, and all their company pay £70,000,000 to their disinherited brethren. But when the ratepayers are required by the Government to pay the compensation money, I claim to be heard on the other side. If we are to talk about compensation, there are *counter claims* which must be pressed. When the licence is granted, it depreciates the value of all the adjoining property. The owners of that property have a greater claim for compensation from the publican than he has from the public. Again, at least half our poor and police rates are the direct results of the liquor traffic. Let the publicans

compensate the ratepayers for those rates before they look for any compensation from the ratepayers.

Our children on the other side of the Atlantic have much more rational and equitable conceptions of compensation in relation to the liquor trade than we have. In Canada, the wife, guardian of the children, or employer of an inebriate, can notify the publican not to furnish him with intoxicants; and if the publican or any person in his service does so within twelve months, the wife or others concerned can recover compensation to the amount of £100 from the publican. Another Act says that if a publican furnishes drink to an intoxicated person, and such person commits suicide, perishes from cold, or dies from accident occasioned by such intoxication, the relatives of the deceased person may obtain compensation from the publican to the amount of £200. Another section of that admirable Act says that if an intoxicated person assaults anybody, or injures any property, the injured party can not only prosecute the intoxicated person, but also recover damages from the party who furnished the liquor. In several of the United States the publican whose customer is imprisoned for drunkenness is required to pay daily towards the support of his imprisoned victim's wife until her husband is released. These are the kinds of compensation

for which ample provision should be made before we hear one word of compensation to the privileged and wealthy liquor monopolists. *The Times* of November 30, 1870, summed up the issue in a sentence which it ought to repeat now: "To put the case in half a dozen words: the profits in which the liquor-sellers now claim a vested interest are realized to a vast extent at the cost of popular degradation, vice, and misery; and the question is simply whether the Legislature of a country is not justified in placing, with due consideration, the welfare of the people above the gains of a trade." Surely Christian citizens can give only one answer to that question. Some of the proposals of the Government in relation to the liquor trade we must probably accept. But this proposal for compensation is a proposal to establish the liquor trade in England as it has never been established before; and to endow it out of the pockets of the rate-payers with endowments far in excess even of the gigantic endowments of the Established Church. It is a proposal so unprecedented, so unjust, and so disastrous, that every good man should offer it the most determined and irreconcilable opposition.

XIII.

*THE SECOND GERMAN EMPEROR,
FREDERICK III.*

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
June 17th, 1888.*

XIII.

THE SECOND GERMAN EMPEROR, FREDERICK III.

"Among many nations was there no king like him."—NEH.
xiii. 26.

THREE short months ago I stood here to pay my humble tribute to the memory of the first German Emperor. To-day I come to lament the tragical death of his greater son, Frederick III. It was only during the last year that the world at large fully realized what a loss was about to befall the human race.

The late Emperor was an ideal prince. We may say of him what Nehemiah said of Solomon : "Among many nations was there no king like him." Many of you have read the remarkable testimony of Mr. Gladstone : "Of all the Royal persons I have ever known, he was the best and noblest." I believe that Frederick III.'s pre-eminence was due to a rare and almost unique combination of manly and gentle qualities. It is too common to use extravagant and even blasphemous language in relation to princes ; but there is little

danger of falsehood or flattery when we speak of the late German Emperor. Like all his race, he was a mighty soldier. In the wars with Austria and with France he led great armies with consummate skill to epoch-making victories. At critical moments his courage, his energy, his promptitude turned the tide of war and changed the face of Europe. But—and this is his claim to lasting honour and love — he *abhorred fields of blood*. With all his heart he loved and promoted peace. There is a strange appropriateness in the fact that his stern father died amid the stress and storm of winter, in the midst of gloom, and hail, and ice. But he himself fell asleep in the sweet and gentle springtime, in the midst of fragrant flowers, and birds of song, and golden sunshine. With all our heavy sense of irreparable loss, it is a great consolation to reflect that the kind and humane spirit of Frederick III. rests now in the sunny land,

“Where everlasting Spring abides,
And never-withering flowers.”

Gentle, loving, tender-hearted, he won the hearts of all who knew him. It is touching to remember that he made so deep an impression upon those among whom he moved; that the wounded soldiers, in the delirium of their deadly suffering, talked of him, and were happy in his imagined smile.

We all know that his *home life* was beautiful. When he visited this country, in early manhood, to woo the Princess Royal, Prince Albert, in a letter to Baron Stockmar, spoke with enthusiasm of the young Prince's "integrity, guilelessness, and disinterestedness." There is something equally simple and delightful in that little episode of the sprig of white heather, which furnished him with an opportunity of winning the greatest prize that God can grant to mortal man—a gifted and devoted wife. Amid all the suffering and darkness of his closing days, we must not forget the long happiness which sprang from his union with one of the ablest and most loving women of our time. A touching evidence of his domestic virtues and his domestic happiness is furnished by the fact that his favourite tune was the "Wedding March." He was always getting the military bands to play the familiar strains which reminded him of the happy hour when he walked out of St. George's Chapel with the Princess Royal on his arm. When he returned to Germany with his young bride, Prince Albert wrote him a long letter, urging him to fashion his public life on enlightened and constitutional principles. He carried out the Christian counsels of his noble father-in-law consistently and to the end. At a quiet family dinner-party in Buckingham Palace, during the Jubilee festivities, the Crown

Prince said that he had always made Prince Albert his model. "Ah!" exclaimed the Queen, tears rushing into her eyes, "imitate him in all things, except in his too early death." Alas! in this also he was to be like the cherished dead. The glowing language in which Tennyson enshrined the memory of Albert the Good may, without exaggeration, be applied to Frederick III.

He was a friend of peace, of culture, of art, and of science. Even in the midst of the terrible war with France he found time to organize a great national institution for the support of the sick and wounded. But many of us revere his memory most of all for the *enlightened and humane policy* which he pursued unswervingly through the whole of his public life. He had no sympathy with the autocratic self-assertion of his father, or the blood-and-iron policy of Prince Bismarck. In 1863 his father and his father's great Minister were pursuing a policy which forced spectators everywhere to think of Charles I. and Strafford. In that year they issued a decree against the Press. When men are carrying out a despotic policy, they generally try to suppress newspapers. At that crisis Frederick, then Crown Prince, wrote a letter to his father deprecating his "unconstitutional conduct." He followed that up by addressing a formal protest

to the Cabinet against a measure that was "both illegal and injurious to the State." He went even further, and in a public speech at Dantzic clearly indicated to the whole world his rooted aversion to all attacks upon free speech and constitutional government. The King of Prussia was so incensed at the attitude of his son, that he requested him to disavow the sentiments attributed to him, with the alternative of being recalled from his high command. The Crown Prince nobly refused to disavow his sentiments, and offered at once to resign his position in the Army, and in the Council of State, adding: "If I am not allowed to speak my mind, I must naturally wish to sever myself entirely from the sphere of politics."

It needed great moral courage to be so resolute and outspoken at that time, and in that exalted position. But his conduct in 1863 was in the highest degree heroic and kingly, and gave him titles to immortal honour superior to any ever won upon fields of blood. It is evident that the Crown Prince's protest was not in vain, and that the king was ultimately convinced that his son was right; for at the close of the war with Austria, the victorious monarch sought and obtained, at the hands of his Parliament, a general indemnity for all the unconstitutional proceedings which the Crown Prince had so fearlessly condemned. When the

late Emperor unveiled the Stein memorial, he gave another striking illustration of the enlightened principles by which he was animated, for he unhesitatingly identified himself with the revolutionary reforms, especially in the system of land tenure, by which that great statesman had laid the foundations of the German Empire. On this occasion the Crown Prince pointed out, with profound sagacity, that military triumphs are the fruit of industrial and social reform. Von Moltke would have been impossible if Stein had not prepared the way.

Frederick III. was, of course, a strong opponent of those persecutions of the Jews which were so strangely and disgracefully approved in certain influential quarters. He had an intense dislike of autocratic ideas, and sought in every way to liberalize the institutions of his country. In one word, it was his fundamental principle to *trust the people*. He was, therefore, a true king, worthy of the mightiest throne in the world. It will always be delightful and pathetic to remember that his last public act was to appoint a successor to the reactionary minister, Herr von Puttkamer, who was mainly responsible for a measure intended to limit the authority of the representatives of the people. Frederick III. greatly disliked a new Act by which the life-term of the Prussian Parliament

was materially lengthened. Despots hate General Elections, and like to appeal to the people as seldom as possible. Frederick III. knew that no feature of Parliamentary life is more precious or more salutary than the provision which compels governments at short intervals to consult the nation. The late Emperor was extremely anxious to inform his people that if he reluctantly signed the Act which made General Elections less frequent, he was on that account the more anxious that when they did take place the electors should enjoy absolute freedom of choice, and that the illegitimate official pressure in favour of Government candidates, which had been too frequent in the past, should not be repeated while he lived. This Christian attitude produced a strained relation with the Ministry, and at last the minister mainly responsible for the situation was forced to resign. In the closing hour of his life, Frederick III. was officially engaged in filling the vacancy. Thus, to his very last breath, the late Emperor used all his influence on behalf of freedom and constitutional government.

There were throughout his brief reign, and there are now, painful signs that the German nation is perhaps not yet sufficiently civilized to appreciate so enlightened and so Christian a sovereign as Frederick III. The last three months were fore-

gleams of a bright and happy day, too good for the Europe of the Conscription and of the *Police des Mœurs*. There are men who live after their time; but there are a few, a very few, of the noblest of the sons of God who live before their time: and in that select and exalted group we must rank Frederick III. He would have been an ideal monarch in England, the mother of Parliaments, the classic land of freedom and of unfettered industry. We can imagine no more perfect model for the Prince of Wales than his brother-in-law, who modernised and brought down to date the noble maxims of his noble father, Albert the Good. The time will come when all lands will sigh and pray to God for rulers as trustful and peaceful and humane as Frederick III.

The late German Emperor was as enlightened and Christian in his foreign as in his home policy. It is well known that if his gentle heart could have had its way, Paris would never have been actually bombarded. When the terms of peace were under consideration, he was for once in happy agreement with Prince Bismarck in resisting—although on other and deeper grounds—the extremely onerous conditions which that sagacious Minister saw would only sow the seeds of future wars. But on that occasion the military party, to the lasting injury of Europe, triumphed over both the Prince

and the Chancellor. Nothing was nearer to the late Emperor's heart, and nothing occupied his thoughts more constantly, than the discovery of some mutually honourable compromise by which the awful feud with France might be turned into a lasting peace. It would be intensely interesting, if it were possible, to know what was said in the conversation which he had some time ago with the Comte de Paris. Among the many sentiments which the late Emperor wrote on slips of paper during the months of speechlessness, was one that I think must have referred to that burning question: "One must get to be much loved by the German nation to be able to give it the peace which is due to it." Does not that sentence reveal the secret longing of his heart—shared, we may be sure, by his noble consort—that he might so win the love and confidence of his people that they would consent to terms of peace that would end the terrible quarrel with France as completely and blessedly as the *Alabama* arbitration ended our quarrel with the United States?

There are some other beautiful qualities which I must name before I close. One of these was his *humility*. Even when unveiling the monument of Frederick the Great, he dwelt upon humility as a virtue which is as much needed by States as by individuals. So saying, he echoed the doctrine of

the Book which declares that one of the three fundamental requirements of all nations is that they shall "walk humbly with God." The late Emperor's own humility had a final and characteristic illustration in his careful and peremptory arrangements for a very simple funeral. I need not dwell upon his *moral courage*—a quality so immeasurably superior to mere physical courage, and so rare. How simply and how quietly he received from Sir Morell Mackenzie the announcement that death was in sight! After a moment of solemn silence, he grasped the great doctor's hand, and said: "I have been lately fearing something of this sort. I thank you, Sir Morell, for being so frank with me." And then the *patience* with which he awaited the inevitable end, never complaining amid ceaseless pain, never neglecting any duty of his Throne—I need say nothing of that. All the world is talking about that. Indeed, his sublime patience has been so great, that few have realized the suffering which it hid. How touching was the message—almost the last—which he gave to his son, so soon to be his successor! "*Lerne zu leiden ohne zu klagen*"—"Learn to suffer without complaining." I have already dwelt upon his beautiful love for his wife and his children. In the last hours of his mortal agony he remembered that it was the eighteenth birthday of

his daughter, the Princess Sophia, and in faint lines he wrote for her upon a piece of paper : " Remain as noble and good as you have been in the past. This is the last wish of your dying father." Whenever he recovered consciousness, his hand sought that of his broken-hearted wife, and held hers fast in his, until he slept again. What a world of significance, in the light of recent events, there is in the fact that the last time Prince Bismarck stood at his bedside, the dying man took the white and trembling hand of the Empress and placed it in the hand of the powerful Minister ! Thus touchingly did he commend one so soon to be a widow to the care and protection of one as soon to be mightier than ever.

Let me close by adding my own little stone to the great cairn which all the world is building to-day to the memory of Frederick III. On the occasion of the Queen's Jubilee Thanksgiving Service, I was in Westminster Abbey. There, as in the procession in the streets, the Crown Prince, in his white uniform, tall, erect, magnificent, was the most conspicuous and impressive figure, attracting all eyes. During prayer, instead of following the undesirable English custom of remaining seated like the rest of the Royal group, the Crown Prince laid his Field-Marshal's truncheon on one side, and knelt down on the floor in the most

simple manner, entering into the worship with marked *devotion and reverence*. There was something in his manner and attitude that no beholder will ever forget; and it was in perfect harmony with the long catalogue of Christian graces and noble deeds which, even in this hasty panegyric, I have been able without flattery and without exaggeration to ascribe to him. So far as he is concerned, we can all joyfully exclaim, with the Emperor of Austria: "Now are his sufferings at an end!" Why God should have allowed so irreparable a loss to befall the human race, at the very moment when the late Emperor's opportunities of high service were greatest, is a problem I will discuss this evening. I close this Conference with the remark that Frederick III. reminds me in many respects of

"The imperial sage, purest of men,
Marcus Aurelius."

Like the great Roman Emperor, he was at the very summit of the world, and he was a lover of mankind. The Roman Emperor uttered the memorable words: "Even in a palace life may be led well." He proved it, and Frederick III. has proved it. This is, perhaps, the best and most inspiring lesson that we can draw from that short reign. It is possible to be the greatest ruler in the world, and yet to retain all the virtues of the

husband, the citizen, and the Christian. In the loftiest as well as the lowliest spheres we can tread in the footsteps of Christ. This shall give Frederick III. honour and love so long as the world lasts. He was the greatest potentate on the earth, and yet he was the friend of freedom and the champion of the people.



XIV,

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Evening,
September 23rd, 1888.*

XIV

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST.

“The multitudes were astonished at His teaching: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.”—ST. MATT. vii. 28, 29.

A FORTNIGHT ago—at the Sunday morning service—I reminded you that the personal quality of Jesus Christ which especially impressed those who knew Him during His life on earth, was, not as we might have guessed, His gentleness, but His moral courage—the rarest and the most valuable of all gifts in the Church Militant. “They took knowledge of” Peter and John, “that they had been with Jesus,” when “they beheld the *boldness*” of those two Apostles (Acts iv. 13). To-night I invite you to notice the peculiarity of the great Master’s public teaching, which impressed all men everywhere He went. Our Bible says His audiences were “astonished.” That word is not strong enough. The Greek expression is derived from the word to strike. It expresses the same idea as our words “thunderstruck,” “stunned.” The great quality to which our attention is directed gave

them a sort of electric shot. They had never experienced anything like it. What was it?

His authority. He was not like the Scribes, the official copyists and interpreters, or, as we should say, printers and expositors of the Hebrew Bible. Their chief concern was to give the traditional interpretation. They perpetually referred to the great Rabbis of the past. They always quoted the recognised authorities. Jesus Christ never quoted anybody to confirm His teaching. He gave them only His own *ipse dixit*. He said simply, "I say unto you." Even Moses, the inspired Lawgiver, who talked face to face with God, humbly based his teaching upon "Thus saith the Lord." But Christ said: "I say unto you." Even Elijah, the greatest of the prophets, cried, "Thus saith the Lord." Christ alone dared to preface His message with, "I say unto you." He did not echo the teaching of others. He did not transmit the doctrine of the past. Well might the Temple officers sent to arrest Him, return overwhelmed and helpless with the avowal, "Never man so spake."

It is, perhaps, specially important in an unsettled age like this, to realize that Christ did not argue and prove. He asserted and decreed. He said, "I am the Light of the world"; and He no more laboured to prove that than the sun labours to

prove that he is the light of the physical world. The sun does not elaborately argue that he is better than a gas-lamp, better than this brilliant electric light, better even than moon-light. He simply shines forth in his strength. And really no argument is needed then. The sun is the sun ; there is no mistake about it. When the sun has once risen and scattered the darkness, you never doubt. No process of ratiocination is needed. You are overwhelmed by the unique glory of the sun. In like manner, no one was ever argued either into Christianity or out of Christianity. When the Sun of Righteousness rises with healing in His wings, you see His glory and rejoice. If He is afterwards obscured by the mist of self-will or the fog of animalism, you may lose sight of Him. But the true knowledge of Christ is always a direct, unmistakable intuition. It is never the doubtful issue of argumentative ingenuity. If any man, full of ignorance or prejudice, exclaims, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" the only possible answer is, "Come and see." As Robertson of Brighton finely said, the highest duty of the Christian minister is to bring his fellow-man face to face with Christ, and then himself to disappear. Alexander the Great asked Diogenes whether he could render him any service. "Yes," replied the cynic ; "cease to stand

between me and the sun." That is what every wise man must say to every human teacher: "Kindly step aside. Do not stand between me and the Divine Sun." The last word of the Christian minister is the word of John the Baptist, which won for Christ His first disciples: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world."

Like those who first heard those words, let us follow Jesus. Let us spend our time under His roof. Let us be as intimate with Him as possible. We shall not be very long in discovering, as the first disciples discovered, that He is indeed the Son of the living God. Allow me at this point to ask you what *you* know about Christ? You have much to say, perhaps, about Christians, and Churches, and Christianity. Let us leave all that. I do not care anything about Christianity, or Church history, or any of these topics of criticism and controversy. Let us talk about Jesus Christ. Do you know *Him*? He has been my most intimate friend for nearly thirty years. Have you any personal acquaintance with Him? What! none whatever? and yet you take upon yourself to give an opinion about His claims! My dear sir, you know absolutely nothing about Christianity until you know something about Christ. Come to Christ: sit at His feet: submit yourself to His influence. You

will soon be astonished, like everybody else who knows Him, at His unapproachable authority.

There is something very impressive in meeting one who asserts such authority in these days. Ours is an age peculiarly intolerant of authority. The old authority is going or gone. Authority must be built up on a new foundation, or it will go altogether. Authority, both in the State and in the Church, must seek the qualities which constitute the authority of Christ. Then all will be well, and society will once more repose on immovable foundations. Men really crave to be under authority. Carlyle was quite right when he said that man is born not to command, but to obey. Let me say, however, in parenthesis, that I think Carlyle was quite wrong in the kind of authority he wished to set up. Frederick the Great was an odious authority. But authority of the right sort we all crave. We must have religious as well as political authority. We must even have an infallible teacher, but most of us fail altogether to find him in Rome. The real authority to which, without doubt or possibility of deception, we can submit our whole being, is the authority of Jesus Christ.

And now, what are the elements of Christ's authority? In the first place, His is the authority of *knowledge*. To Him all hearts are open, and all

desires known, and from Him no secret things are hid. Ponder His words. How true they are! It is the greatest glory of Shakespeare that he held up a mirror to nature. But even the myriad-minded Shakespeare held up a defective mirror. He did not know all human beings. For example, he could not enter into the heart of a child. All his children were grown-up people, trying to be childlike. But Christ held up a mirror to nature, in which there was no defect and no flaw. If you at last, after many disappointments, find a medical man who describes your symptoms exactly, better even than you could describe them yourself, you wisely have confidence in him. The knowledge of the disease is half the cure. Nothing gives me greater strength in my most sceptical moments than Christ's knowledge of me. I ponder His words. I am sure He understands my case. He sees me through and through. He knows what I am, and what I ought to be. Are you ill at ease? Are you unhappy? Is your life a failure? Come to Christ. He will explain the Whence and the Whither. He will reveal to you sin and goodness. He will explain the secret of happiness, and the true life.

Again, the authority of Christ is the authority of *love*. How sympathetic He is, how tender-hearted! Whenever He saw a multitude, He "had com-

passion" on them—compassion deeper and more unselfish even than the compassion of Buddha. Think of His treatment of Zacchæus. "Come down, and make haste, for this day I must abide at thy house. Why "must"? It was the compulsion of irresistible love, because Zacchæus was the greatest and most miserable scoundrel in Jericho. Think of His gracious tenderness to the woman that was a notorious "sinner." "Thy sins are forgiven thee. Go in peace." Conventional propriety, ecclesiastic respectability shocked and horrified—Christ, utterly indifferent to human opinion, yearning with Divine love over the scoundrel and the harlot! And then what unfathomable depths of love in the special message to the man who denied Him with oaths! "Tell My disciples and Peter." Think, again, of the prayer for His murderers and the parable of the Prodigal Son! O Lamb of God! was ever love like Thine? Never, never. No mother ever loved her child so much as Jesus Christ loves every one of us. The late Adolph Monod used to tell how once on the coast of France he tried to induce a weather-beaten sailor to attend a religious service. When every other argument had failed, he used the magic phrase "your mother"; a tear started into the sailor's eye, he rose and consented at once to accompany M. Monod. Oh

the irresistible authority of a mother's love! But even a mother may forget her child. Christ cannot forget you. Do you acknowledge the claim of your mother? Much greater is the claim of Christ.

Lastly, the authority of Christ is the authority of *power*. This was what specially impressed many of His hearers. "They were astonished," writes St. Luke, "at His teaching, for His word was with authority" (iv. 32). St. Mark also writes: "They were all amazed, saying, What is this? A new teaching! with authority He commandeth even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him" (i. 27). Ah, yes! He speaks, and it is done. "I can call spirits from the vasty deep," boasted Owen Glendower. "Why, so can I," replied his mocking comrade; "but will they come, when you do call for them?" That is the point. Any one in these days can describe the beauty of an altruistic life. But how to lead such a life—that is the difficulty. You accept the ethical teaching of Christ? Good: but how will you practise that teaching in your own strength? It is *impossible*. Without the aid of His life-giving Spirit, it is impossible. Have you ever considered the strength of human passion? Can you catch Leviathan with your little hook? What a revelation we have just had in Whitechapel of sin and anguish! How will you cast out the devil of drunkenness, and the devil of lust, and the

devil of gambling, and the devil of greediness? Christ can cast them all out. He is casting them out every day. Now, as of old, He says: "Go and show" him who sent you "those things which ye do hear and see." You believe in facts? I am delighted! You will find plenty of them in our Annual Report, which will be published in a few days. We can give you heaps of authenticated facts from Soho.

Christ speaks with irresistible authority. My conscience confesses the authority of His knowledge. My heart adores the authority of His love. My reason bows to the authority of His power. In Him my entire being rests and rejoices. You may find all you need where I have found it. You may put all this to the test at once. He is able, willing, longing to save you also—to save you here and now.

XV.

THE BROTHERLINESS OF JESUS CHRIST.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
December 4th, 1888.*

XV.

THE BROTHERLINESS OF JESUS CHRIST.

*“Who do men say that the Son of Man is?”—ST. MATT.
xvi. 13.*

YOUR attention is invited this afternoon to that pregnant, far-reaching name of Jesus Christ—“the Son of Man.” It has peculiar interest for us, because it was His favourite name. Nobody else seemed to find special pleasure in calling Him by that name, but it was the name above all others which He delighted to give Himself; and when we remember who Christ was, there is deep interest and significance in that fact. He desired to be known emphatically and supremely as the “Son of Man.” He had a hundred names, some of which may seem to you more brilliant and more worthy than this; but for some reason or other this was the name He preferred. Now, this name, “the Son of Man,” has two sides—a parental side and a filial side. You may emphasize in this complex name the word “man,” or you may emphasize the word “son.”

Let us begin with the parental side. Let us

emphasize the word "man." When you say that Christ is "the Son of *Man*," accentuating and underlining the word "man," this great name means that the human race is summed up in Jesus Christ; that He is the product of all that is best in human nature; that He combines all the excellences of all races and of all ages; that He is, in one word, the *Ideal Man* in whom meet all the highest possibilities of human goodness. Take any other great man, even among those who are the greatest, and you find in him the limitations and the infirmities of his race and of his age. Let us recall the great thinkers of the human race, such men as Plato, Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Victor Hugo. Every one of these men exhibits the limitations of his own countrymen. Plato was a Greek; you cannot conceive him anything but a Greek. Shakespeare, notwithstanding his many-sidedness, was an Englishman. Dante was an Italian of the Middle Ages. You cannot imagine Goethe a Frenchman. You cannot imagine Victor Hugo a German. Great as they were—they were the greatest of their time—these men represented one age only. Take, again, men who have been supremely great, not merely in intellect, but in the highest moral qualities—such men as Confucius, Buddha, Socrates, and the Emperor Aurelius. But you realize at once that Confucius was a Chinaman, that Buddha

was a Hindoo, that Socrates was a Greek, and that Marcus Aurelius was a Roman.

But when you come to Christ, you find in Him all the excellences of all men, of all nations, and of all ages: so that every one who has ever studied the character of Jesus Christ is driven to the conclusion reached by John Stuart Mill; who (although his infatuated father strove hard to poison his mind against Christianity before he was old enough to judge for himself) gradually emancipated himself from the prejudices instilled into his young thoughts, and at last came to see that, whatever we may think of the Christian religion, or of the claims of Jesus Christ, the best test of conduct under all circumstances was this: "What would Jesus of Nazareth have done if He had been in my place?" There is not in Europe to-day a man worth his salt, who would not echo the sentiment of John Stuart Mill. So emphatically was Jesus Christ the Son of Man, so truly did the human race reach its highest possible ideal in Jesus Christ. He is the great moral teacher, the great exemplar; and you and I ought always to do what even John Stuart Mill says we ought to do—imitate Christ. Those who have read the works of Ruskin know how he warns young students of art against wasting their time and destroying their taste by copying inferior painters. Let them go to the great

masters. Even if they cannot copy them perfectly, let them do their best. Now, when we come to the highest question of all—the question of conduct—why should we take any model except the highest? There are some people who have no higher standard than the law of the land—the imperfect, and often unjust law of the land! There are others who take as their standard the conventional etiquette of society; some even take the opinions of the West-end clubs; and I believe there are some who positively accept the guidance of the London morning newspapers.

Is it not time, brother-men, that we should imitate the greatest model of all? Let us hasten to the Fountain Head, to “the Son of Man,” to the living example of all that is best, noblest, most lovely. But so far do many of those who profess to follow Christ wander from His great example, that they resent the use of His name in connection with earthly affairs as a kind of indecency or irreverence. If I may so say, they would like to have Jesus Christ’s example wrapped up in tissue paper, as something to be brought out only on Sunday. The idea of consulting Jesus Christ in relation to business, to politics, and to pleasure, never enters their head. Indeed, they regard me as a most eccentric and dangerous individual, because it has entered my head. I am more and more persuaded

that no religion calling itself Christian is of permanent value, unless you can apply its teaching to rich and poor, and to Saturday as well as to Sunday. I put Jesus Christ before you this afternoon as the model Man, the wisest and the best that ever lived.

Now, having said so much, let us look at the other side. Let us emphasize the word Son—"the *Son* of Man." From this standpoint we find that the Ideal man, the perfect Exemplar, was more than the friend and brother of every human being. Try to grasp it. He felt as a "Son" to the whole human race. To Him the word "Son" expressed the most intense and reverent love. He was the Son of God, and you know how intensely and how reverently He loved God; but He who put that great meaning into the word Son, deliberately called Himself "the Son of Man," in order that He might express by that phrase, with equal intensity and with equal reverence, His *love for the human race*. You remember the touching incident in the life of Noah, when Noah gave way to drunkenness, and when the reverent love of his sons prevailed over his moral downfall. The reverent, filial love of Jesus Christ prevails in like manner over the moral downfall of every man and of every woman. This great name, "the Son of Man," expresses the fact that Jesus

Christ intensely loves every human being in the world, and that He reverences human nature, even in its most degraded forms. His entire freedom from anything like personal selfishness has often been noticed ; but men have not equally noticed that His love of human nature triumphs quite as much over everything else. There are a great many men who are not personally selfish, but who are intensely selfish in other respects.

Jesus Christ was entirely free from *family selfishness*. The late President of the French Republic is at this moment enduring great humiliation because he seemed to cling to his son-in-law, when he ought to have considered the welfare of the nation. Those who are not guilty of that particular offence in that form are often guilty of allowing their family interests to prevail over the public good. Many a man thinks he is justified in doing all sorts of things for his wife and daughter, or for the advancement of his own family, which Christ would not have done. Christ utterly repudiated any special family claim that would interfere with His love to the whole human race. Somebody went to Him on one occasion when He was preaching, and said : "Your mother wants to see you," and He replied in effect : "Who are they who interfere with Me, the Son of the human race?" and turning round to the faithful and

devoted friends near Him, He exclaimed: "Behold My mother and My brethren; for whosoever doeth the will of My Father in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother."

Again, He was entirely free from *class pride* and class hatred of the poor. As one of our time has well said, He was "the most perfect gentleman that ever lived," and yet He had compassion upon the multitudes. He neither feared nor hated the masses. He wept over the people, and He loved them. He loved them all—the bad as well as the good. There was no trace in Him of that class prejudice which exists to such a fearful extent in England to-day, and which is quite inconsistent with pure Christianity.

Again, He was entirely free from all *scorn for the depraved* and the outcast. Think, for instance, of the case of Zacchæus, one of the vilest wretches in Jericho; yet how courteously, how tenderly Jesus Christ treated him, and instead of going to stay with some rich Pharisee, He went to the house of Zacchæus! A most touching illustration of the tenderness of Jesus Christ is to be found in His pity for the harlot. I know nothing in which ordinary, commonplace, conventional Christians differ more completely from Christ than in the way in which they ignore and despise that class. Some of them actually permit the men who create

that class to enter their drawing-rooms and to sit down in their dining-rooms. Oh for the pitifulness of Jesus Christ!

Jesus Christ was entirely free from *ecclesiastical bigotry* and sectarianism. Have you ever thought of the fact that when He wanted to put before His congregation a typical good man, He selected not a Pharisee or some other respectable person, but a hated Samaritan, who was both a heretic and a schismatic. He could recognise goodness wherever it existed. I ventured two or three weeks ago to say that we should be glad to see Christians of all communions at our Friday night meeting. Among the rest I mentioned Roman Catholics, and a number of miserable bigots were horrified because I invited Roman Catholics to come! I also happened to remark that I regarded Father Ignatius as a devoted Christian, though I entirely differed from many of his views; whereupon some unhappy man wrote to urge Mr. Pearse to withdraw from all association with me! Why should I not recognise goodness in a Roman Catholic or a High Churchman? Would to God that those good men who spend so much time in denouncing their theological opponents would spend a considerable part of it in denouncing the devil of bigotry in their own hearts.

Lastly, Christ was not only free from the

bigotry and narrowness which blight so many religious lives, but He was also free from *national selfishness*. No man ever loved his countrymen more truly than Christ did, and yet how heartily He recognised the goodness of the Roman centurion! Let us beware of narrow and intolerant patriotism, swollen with pride. Even I am old enough to remember the time when everything was done that could be done to make us hate the French. Then the newspapers and politicians tried to make us hate the Russians. Some are still engaged in that miserable business. I will not mention any other people, but many misguided journalists are trying every day to induce the inhabitants of this country to hate other nations. It is contemptible and wicked beyond description. You English people have many good qualities, but you have also some very bad ones. The Irish and Scotch have some virtues which we lack, and also their own characteristic vices. The fact is, that God has divided His great gifts among the nations of the world. No one nation possesses all of them. Let us understand that we are subject to the same moral law as every other country. Let us rejoice in the prosperity of other countries. Let us put away the national conceit which was so strongly reprov'd by Christ. Let us realize that no nation is our natural enemy. All nations are

really our friends, and will act as our friends if we treat them properly. Let me remind you that Christ was free from national selfishness, although He was a Jew; and you know how intolerant of other peoples His fellow-countrymen were.

In the current number of *The Fortnightly Review* there appears an article by that remarkable Russian, Count Tolstoi, in which he sums up the teaching of Jesus Christ in five points. Without discussing the rest, I heartily endorse the first and the fifth. The first is this: "Live in peace with all men; treat no one as contemptible and beneath you; not only banish anger from yourself, but do not rest until you have dispelled anger in others." The fifth is: "Renounce all distinctions of nationality; do not admit that men of another nation may ever be treated by you as enemies; love all men alike; do good to all men." I do not know whether that commends itself to you, but that was what Christ said. He loved every country under heaven. He was "the Son of Man." The "mind of Christ" is the mind that is full of the most tender and pitiful love to every human being in every country under heaven. You must love those who hate you; you must bless those who do evil to you. Only thus, as Christ Himself says, "shall you become the children of your Father in heaven." When we can induce all men everywhere to have

the "mind of Christ,"—that is, to regard every man in the world as their brother and every woman in the world as their sister, and thus to be animated by love and by love only—then the desire of Christ will be satisfied, and the happiness of mankind will be perfect.

XVI.

THE HOPEFULNESS OF JESUS CHRIST.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
November 20th, 1888.*

XVI.

THE HOPEFULNESS OF JESUS CHRIST.

“*I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven.*”—ST. LUKE x.
18.

CHRIST had sent out seventy of His disciples to go two and two before His face to every city; and what He told them to do was very significant. When these representatives of Jesus Christ entered any house, He bade them say: “Peace be unto this house,” and He added, “heal the sick that are therein.” In other words, He sent His disciples forth to do what they could, with His assistance, to secure *peaceful and healthy homes* for all the people. If the laws and customs of our nation all tended in the direction of securing peaceful and happy homes for everybody, we should be on the high road to national happiness. I need scarcely say how far we are from that in London, where tens of thousands of people are obliged to live in tenements that are not fit for animals; where thousands of families, as Mr. Pearse reminded us the other day, have to live in one room—a condition of things that is absolutely fatal to decency and to civilization. The sooner we can

induce all our rulers to give their earnest attention to what Richard Cobden said was the greatest of all questions, "the condition-of-the-people-of-England question," the better for them and for us. It is absurd for us to expect national stability and national progress unless we have what these evangelists were instructed to promote—peaceful and happy homes. When they returned to Christ from that blessed mission—the kind of mission on which it would be well to send our members of Parliament two and two over the land—they said they had not only been able to bring peace to many households, and to heal the sick, but that even the devils had been subject to them in the mighty Name of Christ. When they said that, Jesus Christ added the words which form my text this afternoon, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven."

In other words, in the victory which they had gained over some of Satan's subordinates, Jesus Christ saw a pledge and promise of complete victory over Satan himself. To the sanguine eye of Jesus of Nazareth, the victory which on that occasion they won over evil in some of its minor forms, was the sure pledge that the day would come when evil would be altogether conquered. Jesus Christ, when He spoke of Satan, described Him significantly enough as the "prince of this world." There

are some men who boast that they are men of the world. If they are men of the world, and if the devil is the "prince of this world," as Christ says he is, then it necessarily follows that "men of the world" are subjects of the devil. There is no doubt that Satan has a great deal of influence still over human affairs; though, blessed be God! not nearly so much as he had two thousand years ago. There are some persons, I know, who laugh to scorn the idea of the existence of a personal spirit of evil. For my part, I agree with Frederick Denison Maurice that the belief in a personal devil is the only rational view. As for an abstract principle of evil, who cares for an abstract principle of evil? That will never hurt you or me. All the evil with which I have to deal is found in living beings: and unless you are prepared to deny all personal existence except that of human beings, there is no reason why we should not accept the statement of Christ as to the existence of the chief spirit of evil.

And who is Satan? Satan, as Milton says, is the eternal Egotist, the incarnation of selfishness, the worshipper of Power and of Force. He believes the chief thing everywhere is to "look after number one," and he also believes that the battle is always to the strong. Now Jesus Christ believes the exact opposite. He believes the best thing is to secure not your own, but your neighbour's

welfare. He believes, also, that the meek shall inherit the earth. So that between Jesus Christ and Satan there is irreconcilable opposition. At the Temptation, the devil said to Christ: "If you will just pay me one act of homage, you can have your own way." Christ's only reply was: "Get thee behind Me, Satan. Thou shalt worship God." To-day I want to call your attention to the fact that Jesus Christ never agrees to any compromise with the devil, but always assumes an attitude of absolutely irreconcilable opposition to him. It is the irreconcilable opposition, however, not of despair, but of bright and confident hope. At the fall of the Commune in Paris, a few years ago, the Communists fought like tigers. They gave no quarter. They died where they stood. Why? Because they expected no quarter, because the Government troops gave no quarter. They fought, therefore, with all the energy of despair. But the irreconcilable attitude of Jesus Christ does not arise from despair, but from the confidence of ultimate victory.

Let us consider for a few moments this afternoon the unparalleled hopefulfulness of Jesus Christ. He was the most extreme optimist the world has ever seen. If He could but inspire you and me with a little of His optimism, it would be an unspeakable blessing for London, England, and the

world. We can scarcely realize the apparent audacity—I may reverently say the apparent absurdity—of His language and of His manner. He has already won such glorious victories during the last two thousand years that we are tired of hearing about the evidences of Christianity. Christianity is its own evidence. But at that time, to all outward seeming, Jesus Christ was simply a peasant so poor that He very rarely had so much as a penny in His pocket. He was without the advantages of academic culture. He was a man of the people, with scarcely any rich or educated friends to support Him. Yet He made the most sweeping and comprehensive claims a human conqueror has ever made; and He never admitted for a moment that He could be defeated. He counted in the most absolute manner upon the future. However helpless he was, however weak His weapons, He calmly talked of the good day coming when He and His disciples would rule the whole world.

Napoleon Buonaparte, on one occasion, when he wanted cannon conveyed over the Alps, consulted his engineer, who said it was impossible to do it. "Impossible!" rejoined the great warrior. "Never mention that hateful word in my presence again. It is not in my vocabulary." There was some excuse for the vain audacity of that haughty military

genius, who had at his disposal the most mighty army in the world, and the boundless resources of France. But when Christ declared that nothing was impossible for Him to accomplish, He was a penniless peasant. When His disciples came to Him on this occasion and said they had not only brought peace to the homes of the people and healed the sick, but that devils had been defeated, He had a vision of the glorious future that was coming, and He said: "I saw Satan fallen." Satan at that time was so mighty that in every country under heaven the working man was a slave. Christ foresaw a day of triumphant justice and universal brotherhood. He saw the power of evil broken and shattered. He saw God supremely triumphant everywhere.

Now, let us catch something of the spirit of Jesus Christ. Nothing paralyzes our energies more than a positive conviction, or a secret dread, or a half-conscious fear that, after all, we may be beaten; that darkness may triumph over light; and that sin and misery may deluge the world. As these disciples of Christ who went among the people breathing peace and promoting happiness were confronted by devils, so are we. In this country those who wish to be real Christians, and not merely conventional Christians, have at least seven devils to subdue—the devil of Slavery, the devil of

Drunkenness, the devil of Lust, the devil of Gambling, the devil of Vulgarly, the devil of Mammonism, and the devil of War. Now, Jesus Christ saw in the defeat of a few devils on that occasion the promise and pledge of victory over their chief, Satan himself. In like manner let all lovers of Jesus Christ see to-day in what Jesus Christ has already done to overthrow some of our social devils, a proof that they shall all be overthrown, and that sin and misery shall yet be abolished from the earth.

One devil has almost received his quietus—the devil of Slavery. The extraordinary way in which slavery has been abolished everywhere, except where Mahomet rules, is the great fact of our century—an astounding moral miracle, the full significance of which perhaps very few can realize. The world will not be made better by soldiers and policemen. They have their place, but they have never made the world better. As John Bright has said, "Force is no remedy." The world is made better by moral influences. You cannot thrust the devil through with a bayonet, or else we might have despatched him long ago. It is only by moral means that we can overthrow him. Consider the triumph of Jesus Christ over slavery! One hundred years ago it was regarded as inevitable, and many of the great saints of the past,

eminent Christians, and devoted ministers of religion, had slaves. How is it that there are no slaves now? It is mainly due to two men filled with the Spirit of God; and singularly enough they were very poor men, and not men whom you would call geniuses. It is the most romantic page in modern history.

Nearly one hundred years ago a young Cambridge man named Thomas Clarkson, for the mere purpose of getting honour and money, had been induced to write a prize essay on slavery. As he proceeded to accumulate facts and arguments for this essay, he became convinced that slavery was wrong. He completed his essay, and he proceeded from Cambridge to London. On the way he began to think seriously of the awful horrors of slavery, and his heart began to bleed for the helpless African slaves. At last he was so much affected by going over the incidents which he had collected for his essay, that between Cambridge and London he halted at a certain spot, now marked by an obelisk, got off his horse, and, leaning against the saddle, calmly meditated over the question. At last he said in his heart, in response to the voice of God: "If this be so, slavery must come to an end." Then he got on his horse, rode to London, and gave up all his prospects, that he might devote his life to the abolition of slavery.

At first both political parties opposed him, and even the ministers of religion were against him. He was regarded as a most dangerous, fanatical man; and he scarcely got any sympathy, except from a few stray Quakers, who are generally in the right. Ultimately he secured the sympathy of Wilberforce and Pitt; and he lived long enough, did this simple man, to see slavery abolished in the British Empire, and even millions of money voted by Parliament to get rid of it. Behold how, in one short lifetime, and through the power of God, great deeds may be accomplished!

The other champion of the cause of the oppressed slave was William Lloyd Garrison, a poor printer lad, who issued from a garret in a back street in America a newspaper which he called *The Liberator*.

“In a small chamber, friendless and unseen,
Toiled o'er his types one poor, unlearned young man;
The place was dark, unfurnished, and mean;—
Yet there the freedom of a race began.”

He could scarcely get anybody to buy his newspaper. He had to live on bread and water; and if occasionally he managed to sell a few extra copies of his wretched sheet, he indulged in the extravagant luxury of a little milk and bread and butter. After he had gone on for some time, people began to hear of Garrison, who had the

audacity to print in his little paper, "I will be heard." Imagine the impudence of an obscure printer-boy saying from a garret in a back street, "I will be heard!" Nearly fifty years passed away, and the influence of Garrison had spread to such an extent, that all the vested interests said: "This contemptible scoundrel"—whom they had tried to kill several times—"has become so mighty that we cannot put him down except by flying to arms." They flew to arms, but it was too late. The obscure printer-lad had won. He had become,—

"On Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire."

On the ever-memorable day on which Abraham Lincoln emancipated the slaves, every eye turned to William Lloyd Garrison as the real author of that great deliverance. What an encouragement for poor and obscure men! If they are fighting on the side of God and of humanity, though all the world be against them, they shall win!

One other illustration. Mrs. Josephine Butler fought for twenty years with inexhaustible enthusiasm against the great sin of Lust. I know something of that conflict, for it pleased God to call me to her side very early. Let it not be forgotten that when that most pure and brave and Christlike of modern Englishwomen uttered her

loud cry of indignation and anger against the wickedness of those in high places, she was violently opposed by both Houses of Parliament, by the medical profession, by the magistrates, by the Army, and by all the London newspapers. Yet this brave woman, full of the Holy Ghost, fought them all and defeated them all. The moral I desire to point this afternoon is that we must never compound with the devil; we must never have a compromise with hell; we must never admit that any evil is necessary. You will find that incalculable mischief is wrought by admitting that this, that, and the other evil is "necessary"; that we must make the best of it; that we must be satisfied by mitigating it in a slight degree; and that we can never abolish it.

Many years ago a Christian minister, referring sadly to the death of many leading members of his Church, said: "All the great men are dead," when a woman shouted, at the top of her voice: "Thank God, that's a lie!" It was a somewhat unpolished way of putting it; but whenever you hear a member of Parliament, or politician, or journalist, or anybody else, saying that slavery is necessary, that intemperance is necessary, that lust is necessary, that pauperism is necessary, that ignorance is necessary, or that war is necessary, you can, with your Bible in your hand, shout

aloud : "Thank God, that's a lie!" It may take us a little time to rid the world of these social plagues ; but we must have no compromise, no treaty with the devil. Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords, will bring it to pass that Right shall absolutely prevail. When we can find a few more Christians like Clarkson, Garrison, and Josephine Butler, full of the Holy Ghost and of Divine courage, victory will come, and come swiftly too. Jesus Christ said that "Satan had fallen as lightning"—suddenly, in a moment. Yes, in the days of mighty faith and Divine sympathy Satan shall fall, and his fall shall be as sudden as it shall be great and irreparable.

XVII.

BUDDHA, OR CHRIST—WHICH?

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Evening,
Easter Day, 1888.*

XVII.

BUDDHA, OR CHRIST—WHICH?

“One died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they which live should no longer live into themselves, but unto Him who for their sakes died and rose again.”—2 COR. v. 14, 15.

THIS is the Day of days; the greatest Day in human history; the day of the Resurrection of the Son of Man. The sentence just read is St. Paul's philosophy of Easter Day: St. Paul's explanation of its practical significance for us. Let us, from the Pauline standpoint, see how the Gospel of the Resurrection deals with the ultimate need, and removes the fundamental misery of mankind. I propose to do this in a somewhat unusual, but as it seems to me very demonstrative way, by calling into the witness-box a remarkable witness—Buddha, “the Light of Asia.”

Nothing is more significant than the way in which Buddha captivates the imaginations and the hearts of modern Europeans. Even Socrates is superseded at last. The great Athenian is placed beneath the great Hindoo. The moral beauty of Buddha's character has eclipsed the hero of Plato's incomparable pen. I am told that the admiration

of Buddha has gone so far that some of the educated young men in one of our great northern towns openly avow themselves Buddhists. This extravagance is no doubt due to the glamour of Sir Edwin Arnold's fascinating poem, "The Light of Asia." That poem could never have been written by a Buddhist, or by any one who was not saturated with the New Testament. It is a Christian version of the Buddhist legend; and it invests Buddha with a Christian halo to which he has no real historic claim. Moreover, the numerical strength of Buddhism has been grossly exaggerated. Recent censuses and calculations show that there are not nearly so many Buddhists in the world as is commonly supposed.

Nevertheless, after every necessary deduction has been made, it remains that five hundred years before the birth of Christ, Buddhism had reaped great victories; that it is to-day the predominant faith of Asia; and that it has gained its millions of adherents not by force of arms, but by the moral suasion of fervid speech and gracious example. So magnificent a fabric could not rest upon a foundation of absolute falsehood. Some great truth must live in the heart of Buddhism, or it had perished long ago. What is that truth? Sir Edwin Arnold will express it for us.

He tells us in exquisite verse how Buddha,

horrified by the spectacle of Disease, Old Age, and Death, set himself to discover the cause and the cure of human woe :

“Then cried he, while his lifted countenance
Glowed with the burning passion of a love
Unspeakable, the ardour of a hope
Boundless, insatiate : ‘ Oh ! suffering world,
Oh ! known and unknown of my common flesh,
Caught in this common net of death and woe,
And life which binds to both ! I see, I feel
The vastness of the agony of earth,
The vainness of its joys, the mockery
Of all its best, the anguish of its worst ;
Since pleasures end in pain, and youth in age,
And love in loss, and life in hateful death,
And death in unknown lives, which will but yoke
Men to their wheel again to whirl the round
Of false delights, and woes that are not false.’ ”

The last three lines express the doctrine of the transmigration of souls which Buddha learned from the Hinduism in which he was trained. That doctrine intensified his conception of human misery, because it extended it over many lives.

At last Buddha makes the great discovery
At the root of all human misery is—*Trishna*,
Desire,

“That *thirst* which makes the living drink
Deeper and deeper of the false salt waves
Whereon they float : pleasures, ambitions, wealth,
Praise, fame, or domination, conquest, love ;
Rich meats and robes, and fair abodes, and pride
Of ancient lines, and lust of days, and strife

To live, and sins that flow from strife, some sweet,
Some bitter. Thus life's thirst quenches itself
With draughts which double thirst."

The great problem, then, is to get rid of this Trishna, this Desire, this "aching craze to live," this *self-assertion*. How can this be done? Buddha answers :

He "who is wise,
Tears from his soul this Trishna, feeds his sense
No longer on false shows, files his firm mind
To seek not, strive not, wrong not ; bearing meek
All ills which flow from foregone wrongfulness,
And so constraining passions that they die
Famished."

That is to say, he gradually mortifies the Trishna by *starving* it. He resists every form of self-assertion. He cultivates an utter indifference to every kind of self-seeking and self-pleasing ; until, at last, the Trishna—weakened more and more in each successive life—perishes altogether,

"The aching craze to live ends, and life glides—
Lifeless—to nameless quiet, nameless joy,
Blessed NIRVANA—sinless, stirless rest—
That change which never changes !"

That is the Gospel of Buddha ; and it has spread and prevailed over Asia because it is founded upon a profound truth. Buddha is the greatest teacher the world has ever seen, except the Divine Master Himself, because he laid his

finger upon the real source of human misery—
TRISHNA.

Knowledge of the disease is half the cure, and Buddha knew the disease. He called the disease TRISHNA, or *self-assertion*. St. Paul called it the Flesh. St. John called it Unbrotherliness. Our Lord called it Unfilial Conduct. The Prodigal Son yielded to TRISHNA when he said, "Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me." Buddha was quite right in contending that what we want is not self-assertion, but *self-suppression*.

But there are four fatal objections to Buddha's fragmentary and impotent Gospel:—

1. He leaves man to his own resources. He urges him by immense efforts to overcome and suppress the evil that torments him. But this is an impossible task. The utmost achievement of men is to cry out with St. Paul: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me?"

2. The deliverance Buddha offers, even if it were possible, is slow, difficult, distant. Whereas, what man really needs is, "a very present help in trouble" (Ps. xlvi. 1).

3. Buddha makes even that distant deliverance so indefinite that the learned themselves hold the most contradictory opinions about

the final goal, Nirvana. It is quite uncertain whether Nirvana does or does not mean the extinction of separate individuality.

4. Buddha taints his brotherliness with selfishness. Even the wonderful humanity of Buddhism aims mainly at a personal advantage in the extinction of the Trishna.

Now place over against these four fatal defects the four great blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Gospel of the Resurrection :—

1. In the first place, Jesus Christ gives us His own risen life: "God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life" (1 John v. 11, 12). Hence we are saved from self-assertion not by our own efforts—which are smitten with an incurable spiritual impotence—but by the very life of Christ, who abides in us so far and so long as we abide in Him. The power we need is a *free gift*—not the doubtful result of fierce struggling. Abiding in Christ as the branch abides in the vine, we receive "of His fulness" (St. John i. 16).

2. Christ died on the cross "once for all" (Rom. vi. 10). We may therefore reckon ourselves "even so," *once for all*, dead unto sin, unto Trishna. Jesus Christ offers us an

instantaneous deliverance from the great curse of self-assertion. We need not live to the flesh, or be guilty of unbrotherly or unfilial conduct any more. "Sin shall not have dominion over you" (Rom. vi. 14). "Behold now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

3. What Christ offers us is not a vague and unintelligible Nirvana. Christianity does not propose to annihilate self-assertion by annihilating Self. That were to get rid of disease by getting rid of life itself. In the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Trishna goes, but the Ego remains. You are never more truly "yourself" than when "your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). There is no pantheistic sacrifice of personal identity. All that is most truly *yourself* will remain self-conscious and joyous for ever. But the burden of sin, the bondage of selfishness, the anguish of spiritual helplessness will be gone.

4. Lastly, Christianity is contrasted with the fourth defect of Buddhism by the fact that it is free from the least taint of selfishness. Christianity prompts us to lead a humane and benevolent life, not to escape from life, but *for its own sake*, because a humane and benevolent life is in itself blessed for ever.

For these reasons, as well as for others, there is no comparison between Buddhism and Christianity. Buddha pointed out the disease. Let him have deserved credit for that. But he could do no more. He found out no remedy. Christ and Christ alone can

“ Minister to a mind diseased ;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain ;
And, with some sweet, oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart.”

XVIII.

SCHOPENHAUER OR CHRIST--WHICH?

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Evening,
May 6th, 1888.*

XVIII.

SCHOPENHAUER OR CHRIST—WHICH?

“I delight to do Thy will, O my God.”—Ps. xl. 8.

A FEW weeks ago we saw that Buddha had discovered that the source of human misery was TRISHNA, Desire,

“That thirst which makes the living drink
Deeper and deeper of the *false salt* waves
Whereon they float : pleasures, ambitions, wealth,
Praise, fame or domination, conquest, love ;
Rich meats and robes, and fair abodes, and pride
Of ancient lines, and lust of days, and strife
To live, and sins that flow from strife, some sweet,
Some bitter.”

This thirst—

“Quenches itself
With draughts which *double thirst*.”

But the “wise man”

“Tears from his soul this Trishna.”

He “seeks not, strives not, wrongs not” ; until
at last he succeeds in *starving* the Trishna to death.

Then

“The aching craze to live ends, and life glides—
Lifeless—to nameless quiet, nameless joy,
Blessed NIRVANA—sinless, stirless rest—
That change which never changes !”

That is what Buddhism promises, but cannot perform. It is all very well to talk ravislingly about starving the Trishna to death. It cannot be done, except by the power of Jesus Christ. Buddha made a correct diagnosis of the disease, but he knew not the remedy. Asia had still to wait for five centuries before she heard the voice of her great Physician.

The problem which Buddha pondered so pathetically and so absorbingly, has been discussed and explained in a substantially similar way, in our own time, by Schopenhauer, the founder of modern European Pessimism. He finds the root of all misery in "the will to live," in "the ceaseless striving after the unattained." So he defines the TRISHNA.

And is he not, to a certain extent, right? Is not this one side of the truth? We are all conscious of a ceaseless straining after something. We hunger for the bread which perishes. But even though, like Dives of old, we "fare sumptuously every day," we are not satisfied. We are greedy for money. But mountain heaps of money-bags bring no rest. We toil after learning. But the wisest among us are smitten with keener dissatisfaction than the rest. Who are so pessimistic as some of the most brilliant graduates of Oxford and Cambridge? We pine for human

love. But even that does not solace us altogether. In every human heart there is an "aching void" which nothing that this earth bestows can wholly fill. We are "like the troubled sea." We "cannot rest." How shall we satisfy this ceaseless, insatiable longing?

Schopenhauer says that the only course is to educate the intellect, to seek high culture; for with that, he argues, comes first control, and then suspension of our "miserable will." Here he finds the secret of æsthetic pleasure. Art lures man into self-forgetfulness. "Everything is beautiful only so long as it does not concern us." John Stuart Mill tried the same fantastic method of circumventing human misery. He sought piteously to attain happiness by not aiming at it.

Schopenhauer's dismal evangel is an attempt to reach Nirvana by curbing and crushing the Will. This horrible Desire, says Schopenhauer, is the product of the blind, aimless, endless striving which runs through the universe. There is, according to this teacher, no personal God, and existence is a curse. Yet suicide would be no remedy, for the very act of suicide would be a supreme effort of that very Will which must be suppressed. The prospect from every point of view is the blackness of darkness unrelieved by a single ray of light.

Contrast, now, the philosophy of Jesus Christ

with this doctrine of Despair. Our great Master teaches that the ceaseless, insatiable Desire over which Buddha and Schopenhauer so loudly lament, arises from the fact that man is in a false position altogether. You see a fish writhing on the sea shore. You lament this "blind, aimless, endless striving." But why does it writhe so? Because it is out of its element. Pick it up, and throw it back into its native ocean. All its awkward and painful contortions cease at once. It moves to and fro, easily, beautifully, happily. Man, like that poor fish on the sea shore, is out of his native element. He was made to live and move and have his being in the love of God. Taken out of that blissful element, he writhes, pants, gasps, groans, dies. Restore him to the love of God, plunge him into "the Godhead's deepest sea," and all is well. His soul cries out exultingly,—

"O Love, thou bottomless abyss,
 My sins are swallowed up in thee !
 * * * * *
 With faith I plunge me in this sea ;
 Here is my hope, my joy, my rest."

You see a caged eagle. He droops. He is ill. There is anguish in his kingly eye. He dashes his great pinions against the iron bars. Again you lament his "blind, aimless, endless striving." Yes, but shatter that prison-cage. Let him spread his

strong wings, and soar to his native "deep-domed empyrean." Now

"Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands;
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls."

In like manner so long as man is "cabined cribbed, confined" within the prison-cage of sin, he pines and frets his life away. Release him. He "mounts up with wings as an eagle" (Isa. xl. 31). He roves at large "in the heavenly places" (Eph. i. 3). He lives, is free, is radiant with joy.

In a word, man was never intended to lead an independent life, to be thrown on his own resources. At the creation God said, "Let us make man in our own *Image*, after our *Likeness*" "and God created man in His own Image, in the Image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Gen. i. 26, 27). Thoughtful readers in all ages have noticed the marked omission of any reference to the Likeness of God in the second of these verses. The entire purpose of the ever-blessed Trinity was not carried out at once, probably could not be carried out before the Incarnation. Man was created in the Image of God, when God breathed into him a *true Personality*. But how could that human Person attain to the Likeness of the Divine Life until he was united to Christ as the branch is to the vine and

“Christ lived in him”? (Gal. ii. 20). “He that hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life” (1 John v. 12).

Created in the Image of God, man has a true personality. He is self-conscious. He has a sense of right and wrong. He is a free agent. He is, therefore, *capax dei*, capable of *vital union* with Christ, of personal “fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ” (1 John i. 3). Without that vital union, without that personal fellowship, he is like a fish out of water or a caged eagle. He is worse. He is a mere torso, a mere fragment of a man. Hence his ceaseless unrest, and his insatiable desire. Apart from Christ he is in a false position. He is like a branch severed from a vine, or an hand cut off from the body to which it belongs.

In the terribly significant language of Byron, he is

“Lord of himself, that heritage of woe.”

Every man proves as Byron proved, that an independent, *self-centred* life is unendurable. Augustine uttered the profoundest truth when he exclaimed, “O God, we were created for Thee, and we have no rest until we return to Thee.”

Contrast with the anguish of Buddha or Schopenhauer the perfect serenity, the Sabbatic calm of the ideal Man, Jesus Christ. What was the

secret of "the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ" ? It was His absolute and uninterrupted submission to the Eternal Father. Listen to His own words, the exact expression of His life: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me" (St. John iv. 34). Again, "I seek not Mine own will, but the Will of Him that sent Me" (St. John v. 30). Again, "I am come down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me" (St. John vi. 38). At the crisis of His life He cried, "Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (St. Matt. xxvi. 39). At the close of His ministry He was able to say, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." When men come to this Christ and abide in Him their long agony ceases. Their minds being stayed on God are kept in "perfect peace" (Isa. xxvi. 3).

We have now before us the two possibilities of man. For Asia there are only two alternatives—Christ or Buddha. For Europe there are only two alternatives—Christ or Schopenhauer. We might sum up the whole case in the memorable words of Lavater, and say that henceforth for all men there are only two alternatives—Christ or Despair. You deceive your own soul if you imagine the root of your misery is in your circumstances—it is in *yourself*. Well did Milton put into the mouth of Satan these terrible words, "Myself am hell."

Separation from God is eternal torment for man and angel. O soul of man, you are like the weary dove that flew sadly over the wild waste of waters ; and found no resting-place for the sole of its foot, until it returned to the Ark from which it fled. Come back to God, and all will be well. Wander away from God, and there is nothing before you except blackness, and despair, and death.

XIX.

GAMBLING.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Afternoon,
June 24th, 1888.*

XIX.

GAMBLING.

"Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbour's good."—
1 COR. x. 24.

AFTER to-day the Sunday Afternoon Conference will be suspended until the autumn. I praise God for the health and strength which have enabled us to hold this Conference without interruption every Sunday since last October. One member of the Brass Band has died. With that painful exception, all who have taken an official part in this long series of Conferences are here to-day in good health, and with stronger and brighter hopes than ever for the extension of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. I had intended to recapitulate the subjects of our various discussions; and to restate once more our fundamental principle that the Son of God came to save Society as well as the individual. But it is always our rule to make everything give way to urgent practical considerations. I have therefore altered my arrangements, and decided to speak about one of the greatest and most ominous of our national curses—gambling.

It is not without significance that we have never before discussed this topic. Why is it that gambling has never come up? Something is doubtless due to the inevitable limitations of time, of capacity, and of sympathy. It is, perhaps, impossible for any one to be equally alive to all forms of wrong and misery. You and I are pre-occupied with many absorbing enterprises and movements. Still, I cannot but feel that our singular silence with respect to the gigantic social curse of gambling is largely due to the fact that Christian men generally are as unawakened in relation to this evil as our great-grandfathers were to the evils of drunkenness and lust. The time has more than come to face, denounce, and attack the gigantic evil of gambling.

Many years ago Mr. James Greenwood, the "amateur casual," declared that London was afflicted with "seven curses." They were (1) neglected children, (2) professional thieves, (3) professional beggars, (4) fallen women, (5) drunkenness, (6) gamblers, and (7) waste of charity. I should like to amend the fourth section of that indictment by saying, "fallen men" rather than "fallen women." I agree with a wise philanthropist in the conviction that most of these women are not "fallen," but "knocked-down" women. It is the men who are the great curse; the base and cowardly men who prowl the streets at night, insulting every un-

protected woman they meet. Stop the demand and the supply will cease. Arrest these vile scoundrels, and that curse would soon disappear. With respect to the sixth curse, which is our subject to-day, Mr. Greenwood went so far, even at that date, as to say that gambling "causes perhaps more ruin and irreparable dismay than any other two of the curses of London." Without endorsing that very strong statement, which comes, however, from the pen of one who writes with authority, we must admit that gambling has become a gigantic curse. It is also indisputable that since Mr. Greenwood wrote, the evil has increased to an appalling extent.

Fleet Street is now almost impassable when the telegraphed result of some race is expected at the offices of the sporting journals. When the telegram appears in the window, hundreds of fools and scoundrels rush about Fleet Street in a state of lunatic excitement. The most distressing feature of this madness is to see in that wild crowd so many working-men, who, in their shirt sleeves, dash out of the printing houses and other offices of the neighbourhood to learn the result. Another appalling evidence of the spread of gambling is the immense space and prominence which betting intelligence occupies in the ordinary newspapers. So far as I am aware, *The Leeds*

Mercury is the only English daily which has the moral strength to resist the vile contagion. It is particularly gratifying to me, as a Welshman, to be reminded that the vernacular newspapers of my native country are free from this evil. When will the great journals of England rise to the moral level of their contemporaries in the little Principality of Wales? The sad connivance of the ordinary journals does not satisfy the demands of the betting fraternity. They have their own newspapers, and even their daily newspapers. The Christian Churches have long felt the need of a daily newspaper devoted to the high interests of Christianity. We have not yet the strength and unity to secure that. But the gamblers have already more than one flourishing daily of their own.

It is impossible to exaggerate the evils of gambling. Well are the resorts of gamblers called "hells." Gambling, like drunkenness, becomes at last an overpowering appetite, which the victim is helpless to resist. I shall never forget the first gambler who came under my pastoral notice. He was in a good social position, a sober and industrious man. He had a Christian wife, and a healthy, happy family. But the betting mania took possession of him. He often wept and trembled under the Word of God. I could not imagine

why he did not yield to Christ. At last I discovered the chain of adamant which bound him to the depths of hell. It was gambling. Ever and anon the newspapers give us a momentary glance at the devilry and anguish of gambling. Ruin, despair, suicide—these are the three swift steps by which many a gambler passes to his doom. Is it not time to face this incalculable woe, and to attack it?

Is gambling wrong? Must we condemn it absolutely and unhesitatingly? Or can we make terms with it? There are many sophisms in the air. Young men are taught to say that one may do what he likes with his own; and that there is no sin in betting, especially if you bet only for small amounts. When I was at Oxford, a great dignitary came to preach on this subject before the undergraduates, and informed an immense crowd of young Englishmen (unless he was entirely misunderstood) that there was no harm in betting if the sum you risked did not exceed a shilling, or, at the outside, half a crown! But that is not the way to deal with young men. What in the world has the amount of the bet to do with it? Away with all such deadly trifling. On broad intelligible grounds, gambling is either right or wrong. Which is it?

Now, in the first place, even if gambling were

not wrong in itself, its actual deadly effects would make it hateful to every true man. The only honourable and legitimate rule of human conduct is expressed in my text: "Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbour's good." And the practical result is found in St. Paul's memorable words: "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient." You may remember a beautiful episode in the life of David. Three of the bravest of his officers made their way through the Philistine camp; and at the risk of their lives obtained water from the cool well of Bethlehem to quench David's thirst. But their magnanimous leader refused to drink it. He poured it forth as an offering to God, exclaiming: "Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this. Shall I drink the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" (2 Sam. xxiii. 17.) And if David, who lived so long ago, would not for very brotherliness receive pleasure at so great a risk to other men, shall we gamble at the price of broken hearts and shattered homes?

But, secondly, apart altogether from this imperative consideration, gambling is positively and absolutely wrong, and that for two reasons. In the first place, it promotes *gain without merit*. It rewards those who do not deserve reward. The wholesome law of life is that man shall eat his

bread in the sweat of his face, and where that law is systematically violated, the violation is a curse to all concerned. St. Paul says : " Let him that stole steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need " (Eph. iv. 28). This noble precept does not mean that every man must be a manual labourer. A man may often work with his brain much more laboriously and serviceably than with his hand. But it is the indisputable teaching of St. Paul that either with hand or with brain every man ought to work for the public good. He even went so far as to say, " If any will not work, neither let him eat (2 Thess. iii. 10). What an outcry there would have been if I had uttered so revolutionary a sentiment as that ! But some day, I venture to prophesy, the doctrine of St. Paul's will be embodied in the legislation of Christian States. Some day the most despised outcast of human society will be the immoral wretch who does nothing with brain or hand to deserve the bread he eats.

Probably when that millennial day arrives the old Jewish custom of teaching everybody a trade will be revived. It proved an inestimable service to St. Paul himself that he was able to fall back upon his trade as a tent-maker. I might say that

the Jewish custom is already established in the great House of Hohenzollern. The Second German Emperor, whose death we so deeply lament, was a jeweller, and a first-rate jeweller. Technical education should be universal, and every man should be able, if the occasion arose, to "work with his hands the thing that is good," not that he might be able to curse his children with excessive wealth, but that "he may have whereof to give to him that hath need." Now, gambling is the opposite of all this. It gives to him who has not toiled and who does not deserve. It flatly contradicts the rule of the Divine Judgment, which renders to every man according to his work. It directly obstructs the tendency of Christian civilization. It destroys the precious and vital principles of industry and thrift. That is the first fatal objection to gambling.

The second absolute objection is, if possible, even stronger. It promotes *gain through another's loss*. It is, therefore, anti-social and anti-Christian. All lawful trade promotes mutual advantages. This is an un failing test of legitimate transactions. Everything that benefits you by injuring your neighbour is wrong.

Mr. Herbert Spencer has expressed these fundamental objections to gambling very clearly in one of the most interesting and valuable of his writ-

ings, "The Study of Sociology." "Listen," he says, "to a conversation about gambling; and, where reprobation is expressed, note the grounds of the reprobation. That it tends towards the ruin of the gambler; that it risks the welfare of family and friends; that it alienates from business, and leads into bad company—these, and such as these, are the reasons given for condemning the practice. Rarely is there any recognition of the fundamental reason. Rarely is gambling condemned because it is a kind of action by which pleasure is obtained at the cost of pain to another. The normal obtainment of gratification, or of the money which purchases gratification, implies, firstly, that there has been put forth equivalent effort of a kind which, in some way, furthers the general good; and implies, secondly, that those from whom the money is received, get, directly or indirectly, equivalent satisfactions. But in gambling the opposite happens. Benefit received does not imply effort put forth; and the happiness of the winner involves the misery of the loser. This kind of action is therefore essentially anti-social—sears the sympathies, cultivates a hard egoism, and so produces a general deterioration of character and conduct" (p. 306).

For these reasons every gambler is either a fool or a scoundrel, or both.

We must ask one other question before we close. How can we arrest this gigantic and unmitigated evil? First of all, has not the time come to form an Anti-Gambling Society, for the purpose of creating and directing public opinion upon the question? We have societies for the purpose of suppressing drunkenness, lust, and war; and we know what vast changes in opinion and law they have already effected. Why could we not do the same thing in opposition to gambling? The time has come to boycott all gamblers. They ought especially to be expelled from the House of Commons. Nothing would do more to impress the public conscience than to make gambling a moral disqualification for a seat in Parliament. Rational Christians can already see that debauchees, drunkards, and gamblers, are utterly unfit to make the laws of England. We must agitate for the rigid exclusion of such enemies of mankind. We must make it as impossible for them as it would be for a pirate, to be elected. When we have cleansed Parliament of their polluting presence, the task of cleansing minor public bodies will be comparatively easy. We ought, further, to hold public meetings, preach sermons, and take pledges against gambling. We should also warn children in Day and Sunday schools against this insidious and aggressive curse.

But it will not be enough to use all these methods of moral suasion. We must also invoke the aid of law. The law already prohibits lotteries. The principle is conceded. The law also prohibits betting houses on the well-recognised ground, that while there are many offences which cannot be made criminal, the intervention of a third party to promote or facilitate these offences comes legitimately within the scope of repressive law. Betting houses and betting clubs must be put down by the police, as they have been in the past, but much more vigorously. There must, however, be no distinction between rich and poor. Police raids have often been made upon the betting houses of the poor and of foreigners. The notorious haunts of aristocratic gambling must no longer be spared.

But I have reserved until last the most effectual, perhaps the only effectual remedy to gambling, and that is, *to prohibit by law the publication of betting intelligence in any newspaper.* The cheap newspapers are the great agency which has carried the temptations of gambling to every family in the land. An eminent Russian statesman said a few weeks ago that there would be no war in Europe if he were permitted to hang all the editors of newspapers. I would guarantee the suppression of English gambling on the same terms. It is

difficult to realize the immense power of the Press. It is with great reluctance that high-class journals have opened their columns to betting intelligence. All upright editors would welcome the assistance of the law in excluding that degrading matter. They can scarcely venture to exclude it until their dangerous rivals are also compelled to do the same. The present Government has passed a law to fine and imprison journalists who report the proceedings of suppressed branches of the National League. That method might without hesitation be employed to suppress gambling. Virtuous and humane men ought not to have two opinions about its legitimacy in relation to this unquestionable evil. Heavy fines, and if they fail, imprisonment ought to be the swift punishment of all editors, printers, and newspaper proprietors who publish betting intelligence. When that law is passed we shall have laid our axe at the very root of the Upas tree of gambling.

XX.

A TIMELY WARNING.

*Preached in St. James's Hall, Sunday Evening,
July 8th, 1888.*

XX.

A TIMELY WARNING.

“Impossible.”—HEB. vi. 6.

CANON WESTCOTT, in a recent volume of sermons, has directed attention to this Epistle as peculiarly suitable to the present age. It was written to men in circumstances remarkably similar to our own. The burning of the Temple, and the scattering of the Jewish race had involved revolutionary changes in Church and State; and had rudely shaken the traditional interpretation of the Bible. It was an era of change, and free criticism, and universal readjustment. They were in the presence of new ecclesiastical leaders, new national policies, new religious teachers. The very foundations beneath their feet seemed to be shaken. In many respects we have a similar experience. The author of this Epistle came to comfort and console them, as he now comforts and consoles us, with the assurance that notwithstanding all these changes and revolutions, the old truths were about to triumph more fully and more gloriously than ever. Canon Westcott has dwelt

with characteristic sympathy and subtlety upon that side of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

But there is quite another side, and quite another lesson. Indeed, the main object of the Epistle is not to comfort but to warn the readers. In such a transition age as theirs and ours, men are in special danger of lax notions and lax conduct. I shall never forget the impression this Epistle produced on me some years ago when I read it through at a sitting; and felt the main current of its teaching. It is really a terrible Epistle. The author shows that both men and ages have sometimes lost their great opportunity, and lost it irrevocably. He illustrates this appalling truth in the case of individuals, from the history of Esau. That unhappy man sold his birthright for a mess of pottage; and when he began to realize the painful consequences of the act he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. The same truth is illustrated in the case of nations, by the fact that the generation which came out of Egypt sinned away their great opportunity. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness. They could not enter Canaan. He solemnly warns the Hebrew Christians that, in like manner, if they sin away their opportunity of spiritual salvation in Christ, it will be "impossible" to save them by any other means.

This terrific truth is emphasized by the use of the word "impossible." He is speaking to those who have enjoyed the characteristic blessings of the Christian faith. If they, under the influence of an age of change and scepticism, become confirmed apostates, there is no hope for them. They have deliberately rejected the only remedy. In describing their participation in the Gospel the author uses the beautiful Greek conception of it, rather than the Latin conception, with which we are more familiar. The Latin Church speaks of "conversion"—a turning round from evil to good. The Greek Church, more intellectual, describes the great change as "illumination"—the diffusion of Divine Light through the dark soul of man. In this way the author of the Epistle before us describes those of whom he writes as "enlightened." Then he mentions four characteristic features of those who are thus "enlightened." First, they have "tasted the heavenly gift," the Divine manna, Jesus Christ. They have had an actual personal experience of living union with Him. Secondly, they have been "made partakers of the Holy Ghost"; their hearts have been the temples of the Divine Spirit. Thirdly, they have "tasted the good word of God"; they have understood the spiritual meaning of the Bible. Fourthly, they have "tasted the powers of the age to come"; they have had per-

sonal experience of the supernatural life of real Christianity, and of the miraculous answers to prayer which real Christians receive.

Now, if any man who has had this experience of the Eternal Life falls away fully and utterly, it is "impossible" to "renew" him again unto repentance. He has consciously and deliberately rejected the only remedy. God Himself can provide no other. The author uses a very striking and terrible illustration from nature. He says that a piece of land may be so incurably filled with the seeds of thorns and thistles, that the more it is watered with life-giving rain, the more prolifically it brings forth these obnoxious products. In like manner, our natures may be so much changed for the worse, that all good influences will only bring out more and more evil in us.

The very same sun which melts wax hardens clay; and by persistent sin against the clearest light and the best opportunities, our hearts may be so completely turned into clay that all the influence of Divine Love may only harden us more and more. Force is no remedy. God cannot coerce us with policemen and soldiers, to love Him. He can only conciliate us by the most affecting exhibition of His Love; and, if that fails, He has no other resource. We may become so perverted and corrupted that the very Love of God will only

harden us. Look at the two brigands who were crucified with Christ. They saw His dying agony, and one of them was melted into penitence. But the other was only hardened, and died with a hissing curse upon his lips. We have but to open our eyes and look around us, to see what a fearful power the free will of man has to turn the supreme blessing of Divine Love into a supreme curse. Who are the most bitter enemies of Christ? The drunkards, the harlots, the outcasts of all sorts? No. Those who have sinned against the light; those who have felt the power of Divine Love; those who have consciously resisted the Spirit of Christ.

The authors warn the tempted Hebrew Christians not to reject Christ. If they reject Him, there is no other Saviour. There are multitudes in all lands, and in this land, who have never rejected Christ; who have never had the opportunity of intelligently and deliberately rejecting Christ. There is hope for them—more hope, perhaps, than we dare to cherish.

“Whom the heart of man shuts out,
Sometimes the heart of God takes in.”

The text does not refer to them. There is only one “unpardonable sin,” and that is the sin of *finally* rejecting Christ. And that sin, remember,

is unpardonable in *the very nature of things*, and not as the result of some arbitrary act on the part of God. It is very difficult, but not impossible, to commit "the unpardonable sin." "In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." For Christ's sake the heathen are judged according to the light granted to them. Full and ample justice is done to all. And the great opportunity comes to all. But if that opportunity is lost, there is no other. There can be no other. God cannot provide any other. There is "no other name under heaven, wherein we can be saved." Mark it well—at some time, in some way the great opportunity comes to all; but if it is finally rejected it cannot be renewed or repeated.

I say *finally* rejected. We must beware of the Montanist and Novatian errors. The text does not mean that backsliders cannot be restored. We have many blessed proofs to the contrary. He who bids us forgive our brother seventy times seven, will never hesitate to forgive us, however far we have wandered from Him, if we return to Him. But we may wander so far that the disposition to return will be utterly destroyed within us; will be replaced by a disposition to flee from Him. Large and ample opportunity is given to us; but if that be deliberately and finally rejected, it is "impossible" to renew us to repentance.

“Once to every man and nation, comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side ;
. . . And the choice goes by for ever.”

There is no second probation. How *can* there be, if the first probation is an exhaustive one? A second probation necessarily assumes that, in some way or other, the first probation has not been full and complete. But I assume that the power and wisdom of God will secure to every man a perfect probation. If man fails under that perfect test, the resources of God Himself are exhausted. He can do no more for us. He has provided us with salvation in Christ. But if we reject that, what more can God do? Nothing—nothing.

This life is a very real probation ; and ours is a tremendous responsibility. Our whole future hinges, necessarily and inevitably, upon our treatment of Christ. “He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life ; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him ” (St. John iii. 36).

Now, as when this Epistle was written, we feel the doubts and difficulties of a transition age, and the situation is full of peril. A lady who has associated all her life with persons of high rank and literary distinction told me a few days ago that

she finds it almost impossible to shake off the influence of the cynical scepticism which has enveloped her from her childhood. All her days she has been taught that "*nothing is certain, and it does not matter.*" That sentiment works the most deadly mischief. The Eternal Verities are dismissed with a cynical smile. But they refuse to go. The Bible is true. The words of Christ abide for ever.

Some who do not go so far as the cynical agnostics of fashionable and self-indulgent Society, nevertheless cherish a vague hope that all will yet be well even for those who deliberately reject Christ. They cling desperately to the notion that in some way or other of which we have as yet heard no whisper, God will save those who intelligently refuse to be saved by His Son. All these thin and restless sentiments dash themselves to pieces against the solid rock, the immovable word—Impossible. They are probably founded upon an utter misconception of the "omnipotence" of God. That word does not mean that God can literally do anything. It means that He can do anything *consistent with His nature*. One attribute is necessarily limited by another. God is not mere Omnipotence, mere irresistible Force. That is the *Mohammedan delusion*. He is also Wisdom, and Goodness, and Love. The first Napoleon used

to say that the word "impossible" was not found in his vocabulary. But that was, of course, an epigrammatic exaggeration. The word "impossible" is found even in the vocabulary of God. It is "impossible for God to lie" (Heb. vi. 18). It is impossible for Him to alter the past. It is equally impossible for Him to save any man except through and in Christ. He will try to save every man by Christ. If any man is not saved, it will be that man's own fault. But every one of us *can* frustrate the love of God.

By continually resisting God we can gradually change our nature. Our Acts of deliberate rebellion harden into Habits, our Habits harden into Character, and Character may become fixed for ever. In the course of our probation we may bring ourselves into a condition in which the love of God ceases to attract and conciliate us, in which it repels and irritates us. Then all is lost. How wonderful is the watershed of a great mountain range! Here is a little spring. It makes a small pool of water. The water overflows. Because it is on the south side of the watershed, the water flows evermore towards the bright and sunny South. You advance a few yards. Without knowing it, you have crossed the narrow watershed. There is no visible dividing line. But you see another little spring, with its small pool. The

water flows forth ; lo ! it is turned now to the North, and it flows for ever toward the darkness and the bitter cold. There is such a watershed in your moral nature. Have you reached the fateful line ? Have you crossed it ? Alas ! from this time forward all the springs of your life flow away from God toward the blackness of darkness and all the desolations of death.

It is useless to deny or ignore that awful possibility. Even Lowell, the sanguine poet of democracy, is obliged to utter the bitter cry of a lost soul :

“ I hear the reapers singing go
Into God’s harvest ; I, that might
With them have chosen, here below,
Grove shuddering at the gates of night.”

Well might Dante inscribe over those gates : “ All hope abandon, ye who enter here.”

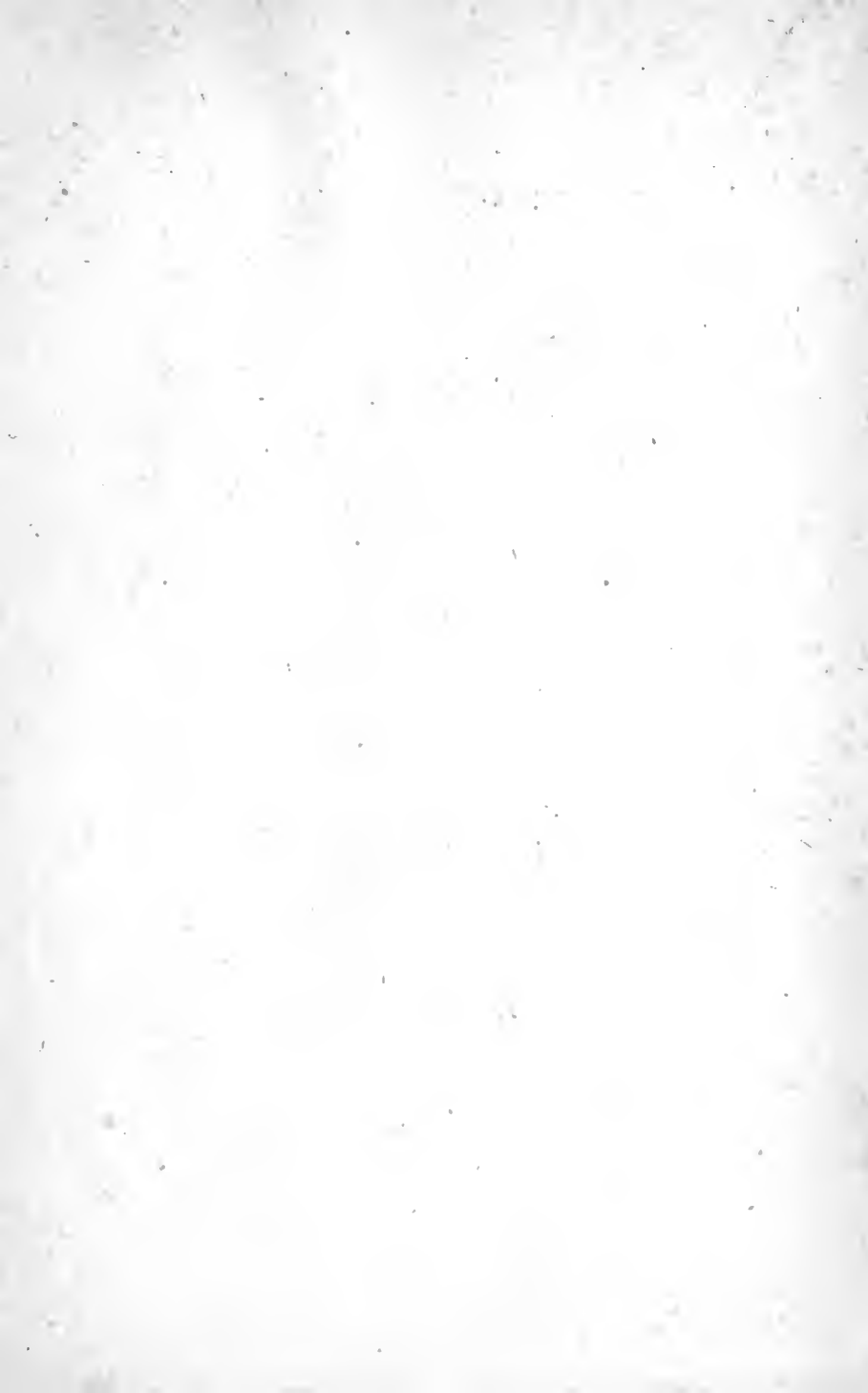
They have deliberately rejected Christ. God Himself is helpless now. At great cost, how great He alone knows, His love provided a way of escape. They wantonly and wilfully closed that way. There is no other. There can be no other. They are undone for ever. All pleas, protests, arguments are silenced by the one word—Impossible.

Is this a matter for mirth or trifling ? Why has God compelled me to take this theme to-day ? I

place myself in His hands. I do not choose any text. I wait. I wait. I cry: "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." This week when the text came, I shuddered. I found that it was a word—the word "Impossible." I would have fled from it as Jonah fled from Nineveh. But I dared not. Is there some one in this vast audience to whom, by my voice, God sends this last appeal? Do you not know that every hour you delay to accept Christ, you are changing your heart, you are forming your final character, you are making your soul proof against the love of God? The hour of final choice draws nearer, nearer, nearer. You may have entered upon it now. Repent. Escape for your life. Flee to Christ, and all will yet be well.

Resist, refuse, go away unsaved, and Christ may be compelled to follow your retreating figure with the bleeding heart, and with the irrevocable words with which He followed Judas Iscariot: "It would have been a good thing for that man if he had never been born."

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